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THE

Moral Philoſopher.

VOL. II.

T. Morgan.

BEING A FARTHER

VINDICATION

OF

MORAL TRUTH and REASON;

Occaſioned by two BOOKS lately publiſhed:

ONE INTITLED,

The Divine Authority of the Old and New Teſtaments aſſerted. With a particular Vindication of MOSES and the Prophets, Our Saviour JESUS CHRIST, and his Apoſtles, againſt the Unjuſt Aſſertions, and Falſe Reaſonings of a Book intitled, the MORAL PHILOSOPHER. By the Reverend Mr LELAND.

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THE OTHER INTITLED,

EUSEBIUS: Or, *The True Chriſtian's Defence*, &c. By the Rev. Mr CHAPMAN.

By *PHILALETHES.*

LONDON

Printed: And ſold by the Bookſellers of *London* and *Weſtminſter.*

MDCCXXXIX.

THE

PREFACE.

THIS Author begins his Preface by declaring himſelf for *rational* Free-Thinking, and I am as much againſt *irrational* Free-Thinking as he; and from hence it might be thought that we muſt be both agreed, but yet it happens to be otherwiſe. There is ſome ſmall Difference between us, which lies only in the Nature of his Diſtinction, or the different Senſe and Meaning of the Words *Rational* and *Irrational*. He thinks that *rational Chriſtianity* is neceſſarily connected with *Judaiſm*, and that the Truth of it cannot be proved without the Authority of *Moſes* and the Prophets; but I am of a quite different Opinion, and take this to be a falſe and

dangerous Principle, that is inconſiſtent with Chriſtianity, and muſt, in its natural, neceſſary, Conſequences, ſubvert and overthrow it. I agree with the Author, that every Man's Pretenſions to Reaſon ought to be examined; and accordingly I have followed him through all his Pretenſions, which has coſt me ſome Pains, but may not I doubt be of equal Uſe and Advantage to the Reader. For though ſuch an Examination and Defence might be neceſſary for the Sake of thoſe who cannot ſee a Sophiſm from an Argument, or who can go no farther than they are led; yet the intelligent Part of the World, I am ſatisfied, could need no ſuch Help.

This Writer makes a glaring Appearance and lofty Sound with the Words, *Chriſtianity*, *Inſpiration*, *immediate Revelation*, &c. which he often repeats with an Air of Triumph, without affixing any diſtinct Ideas to the Words themſelves. He talks much of *Revelation above Reaſon*, and of Doctrines which

which we are to receive upon the Foot of *Authority*, abſtracted from any Reaſon or Fitneſs of Things, as appearing to the Underſtanding. But how is this *Authority* proved, which is to be the Ground of Truth? Why by *Miracles*. And what natural, neceſſary, Connexion have Miracles, or the Power of working them, with the Truth of Doctrines? Why really none at all that this Author knows, or is able to make out, as will plainly appear afterwards, and in due Place. The Evidence of Miracles, as a Proof of Revelation above Reaſon, and the neceſſary Connexion of this, with the Infallibility of human Authority, is, for ought I can ſee, the great Foundation upon which this Author has choſen to ſupport Chriſtianity. But certainly this cannot be that eternal, immoveable, Rock upon which Chriſt has built his Church, and againſt which no Powers of Earth or Hell ſhall ever prevail. But if this Foundation ſhould prove to be nothing but Sand or Water,

and uncapable of ſupporting ſuch a Weight, this Author, and others who have been building ſuch Caſtles in the Air with him, muſt look to that, for I am ſure that real Chriſtianity will ſtand better without their Foundation than with it, and muſt ſtand when their Caſtle is fallen, and their enchanted Iſland ſunk. And whatever Connexion there may be between *Miracles* and *Truth*, I doubt not but to make it appear that there is no Connexion at all between *Chriſtianity* and *School-Divinity*.

Truth, like the Sun, ſhines with its own Light, and is the natural Object of the Underſtanding, as viſible Objects are of the Eye, or viſive Faculty. It may indeed be differently modified and diverſified, and its natural Poſition and Appearance altered, like a natural Image in the Focus of an Optic Glaſs. It may be magnified or leſſened in any given Proportion, made of vaſt Conſequence, or of no Conſequence at all, placed

cloſe

cloſe to the Eye, or at an infinite Diſtance, and repreſented as within or without, above or below, the Glaſs, juſt as the Opticians pleaſe. And this is the Art of *Spiritual Scholaſticiſm*, or *Syſtematical Divinity*. Such a Glaſs they make of Scripture, and juſt ſuch a Uſe they apply it to. And from hence one would imagine, that they muſt uſe very different Glaſſes, though they all vouch it upon their Word and Honour, that they uſe one and the ſame infallible Glaſs, conſtructed upon the ſame Property and Principle of Viſion, without any Thing of Art or Deception. Such falſe Lights and infatuating Guides muſt Men be, when, ſetting aſide the Nature, Reaſon, and Fitneſs of Things, as appearing to the Underſtanding, they pretend to direct and ſteer us by *Divine Authority*. This is a Pretence that may equally ſerve any Purpoſe, and has in Fact been the real Foundation of all the Impoſture, Superſtition, and falſe Religion in the World. All Superſti-

tion has ever flown to this glaring, deceiving, Light, againſt the Light of Reaſon and Moral Truth, which it cannot bear, and will not be tried by.

It is a firſt Principle with this Author, which he every where ſuppoſes, but cannot prove, and dared not attempt the Proof of it directly, that the Miracles were wrought in Confirmation of the Truth of the Doctrines, which could not otherwiſe have been proved or received as *Divine*, or as *coming from God*. But I have ſufficiently confuted this weak and groundleſs Pretence, and ſhewn that there was another very important End of the Miracles antecedent to the Proof, or any Propoſal and Conſideration of the Doctrines, and that till this End had been obtained, no farther Step could have been taken among the *Jews*. And this was to procure Admiſſion to the Prophet, and Attention to his Doctrines. For this People would never have received any Man as a Prophet, or paid the leaſt Regard to his Doctrines,

Doctrines, though they ſhould have been ever ſo clear, rational, and demonſtrable in themſelves, if the Teacher had not wrought Miracles. This was the Way in which they had been always brought up, or the Pedagogue-Diſcipline of that dark Diſpenſation. But they had never known, or been taught, any Thing of the neceſſary Truth, Reaſon, and Fitneſs of Things in their own Nature, antecedent to any poſitive Will or Command of God. And though they were now to be brought into a clearer Light, taught the right Uſe of their Underſtandings, and let into the Reaſonableneſs and Fitneſs of what was required of them; yet they muſt be brought to ſuch Attention and Conſideration in their own Way, and nothing leſs than Miracles could have done it. But this Author and they who think in his Way, ſeem to have as groſs Notions and Apprehenſions of divine Authority and poſitive Commands, as the *Jews* themſelves had. They thought that God at ſundry

dry Times, and on certain Occaſions, appeared and ſpoke to the Prophets, and gave out his Commands by Word of Mouth, or in ſome viſible, ſenſible, Manner, as Authority is conveyed among Men. But more of this in due Place.

This Author ſeems to lay the great Streſs of Chriſtianity, as a Revelation, upon the Evidence of Miracles, as the true and only Proof of it. But what thoſe Doctrines are which neceſſarily depend on this Proof he has not thought fit to tell us, and perhaps might have found it ſomewhat difficult to have ſet down a Liſt of them. He would not, I preſume ſay, that the Being of God, his natural and moral Perfections, our Relation to him as his Creatures and Subjects, and the ſeveral Obligations of Truth and Righteouſneſs from thence reſulting, with Reſpect to God and one another; he would not ſay, that theſe are the Doctrines and Obligations which depend upon Miracles, and which could not otherwiſe have been known or

proved from any prior Evidence, Reaſon, or Fitneſs of Things. Nor can he ſay that the hiſtorical Parts of Scripture, relating to the Prophecies and Miracles themſelves, could be proved by Miracles; ſince theſe being Matters of Fact, muſt depend on the Teſtimony, and are uncapable of any other Proof. Thoſe Doctrines therefore which neceſſarily depend on the Evidence of Miracles, muſt be ſuch as had no prior Reaſon or Fitneſs in themſelves, or no rational Relation to, or Connexion with, Moral Rectitude and Happineſs. But what theſe Doctrines are, we are yet to ſeek, and are like to be ſo.

Formerly, the Doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, and Hypoſtatical Union, of three Perſons in one Subſtance, and two Subſtances in one Perſon; Original Sin, Imputed Righteouſneſs, Juſtification from Eternity, by Faith without Works, or without any rational free Acts of Obedience in ourſelves, the eternal abſolute Decrees of Election and Reprobation

probation by mere Will and Pleaſure, with the external Proof of all this by Miracles, and the internal Proof by the Witneſs and Teſtimony of the Spirit: Theſe, I ſay, were the fundamental, eſſential Points of ſupernatural Revelation and Religion. And becauſe theſe high Points of Doctrine were incomprehenſible to human Underſtandings, and beyond the Capacity of all human Faith, therefore they aſſerted the Neceſſity of a ſupernatural Gift of Faith, or ſpiritual Illumination, to enable Men to perceive and judge of ſuch Things as the natural Man, or Man by his natural Faculties, could not perceive, comprehend, or judge of. Now this Scheme, though it might be abſurd enough, was however conſiſtent, and contained nothing of Self-Contradiction in it. For they had a ſupernatural Faith, or Faculty of perceiving and judging of ſupernatural Objects, and thereby ſuited the Faculty to the Object. But ſome Gentlemen and *Sub-Reformers*, who have been rather for mending

mending than new making, have ſince fancied that they have found out a middle Way, or Medium between Truth and Falſhood, Reaſon and Enthuſiaſm, Religion and Superſtition. They would throw off part of the ſuper-rational Scheme, but not all, and what they do retain, they would prove from the common Principles of Reaſon, without any Thing of perſonal Inſpiration, or ſupernatural Gift of Faith in themſelves. But by this they have been reduced to a great Perplexity, being continually ſuſpended between two contrary Extremes, and are forced, as Occaſion ſerves, to run from one to another, as Neceſſity drives them. Sometimes Chriſtianity is a moſt rational Religion, evidently founded in the Nature, Reaſon, and Fitneſs of Things, and then its Clearneſs, rational Certainty, and intrinſic Goodneſs, is cried up as the peculiar Excellency of its Doctrines: But at other Times, and to ſerve other Purpoſes, Chriſtianity is a Matter of immediate Inſpiration, or Revelation above

Reaſon, which muſt be founded in mere Authority, abſtracted from, and prior to, any Reaſon or Fitneſs. And this Authority, of which we can have no other Proof or Rule of Judgment, but human fallible Teſtimony, they yet moſt abſurdly call it *immediate divine Authority*, and as ſuch would intrude it upon us. But Truth is in its own Nature prior to all Authority, and the Authority of God himſelf is founded in the Nature and Reaſon of Things; but to found divine Authority upon human Authority, and leave us no other Rule or Mark to know or judge of it, is a ſtrange Inverſion of Nature and Reaſon. This has been ever the Method of all Impoſtors, and without which no Scheme of Superſtition, Impoſture, and falſe Religion, could ever have been eſtabliſhed or ſupported. But that God ſhould reſt his Will, and the neceſſary Means of Salvation, upon ſo precarious a Foot as fallible human Authority, without any prior, ſuperior, Teſt or Rule, whereby to try and judge of

it,

it, is altogether incredible; and how well our Author has ſupported this common Plea and Pretence of all Impoſture, will appear farther on.

I am very ſure, that the firſt Principle which this Author every where ſuppoſes and argues upon, is the grand fundamental Principle of all *Impoſture* and *Enthuſiaſm*, and has been always ſo from the Beginning of the World to this Day. And that this Principle ſhould hold good only in his Cauſe, or as applied to his Purpoſes, and not otherwiſe, is not to be ſuppoſed and taken for granted without Proof. And ſince the Gentlemen of his Stamp cannot reaſon or argue at all, without ſome Charge or other of *Immorality*, or *Moral Wickedneſs* and *Infidelity*, is the common Complaint, which, with great Freedom and Civility, they beſtow upon their Adverſaries; I am willing to adjuſt the Account between *Infidelity* and *Impoſture*, with him, or them, or any one of them, whether the Balance ſhould fall on their Side

Side or mine. It ſeems, that in this Debate, one Side or the other muſt not be only weak, ignorant, and miſtaken, but morally wicked and ungodly too. This is a Matter, doubtleſs, of very great Importance, to which the Reader ought carefully and diligently to attend. And, I hope, the People in general will not take a mere Appeal to their Paſſions, from the great Pretenders to Truth and Orthodoxy. Let them but lay aſide Paſſion and Prejudice, judge equally on both Sides, and make Reaſon and Scripture the Rule and Teſt of their Judgment, and we deſire no more of them. Criminal Deiſm, Infidelity, profane Malice and Enmity to Chriſtianity, is a very high and moſt criminal Charge, and therefore the Proof of it ought to be proportionally clear and ſtrong; or otherwiſe they who bring the Accuſation, and lay it in with ſuch Effrontry, muſt be looked upon as Impoſtors and Deceivers of the People, by the whole impartial and intelligent World. In ſuch falſe

falſe Imputations lies the great *Baſeneſs* of ſuch *Accuſers*, and yet here it is, that they place their main Strength.

By *Infidelity*, as this Author uſes and applies the Word, he can mean nothing but a ſuſpending the Judgment in doubtful Matters, or with-holding the Aſſent, where the Evidence does not appear ſtrong and convincing enough. Every Man who is not quite ſo *credulous* as he, and who cannot take Things upon the ſame Truſt, is with him an *Infidel*. But this Credulity and Incredulity, with Reſpect to the Judgment, or bare Aſſent of the Underſtanding, has nothing of a Moral Nature in it. Though the great Weakneſs and Danger commonly lies on the credulous Side, and Mankind have been always apt to believe rather too much than too little, and have ſuffered infinitely more by it. And yet one might imagine from this Writer's Uſe of the Word, that Hiſtorical Credu-

lity was the juſtifying Faith of Scripture, and Incredulity of this Kind the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, or ſomething near it. But whether this may be moſt owing to the Author's Ignorance or Malice, and ill Deſign, I ſhall not determine. The Practice of Temperance, Righteouſneſs, and Godlineſs, from a fiducial Truſt in, and Dependence upon, God, and keeping up a conſtant Senſe of his Power and Preſence in all our Actions, is that *Faith* which denominates Men *faithful*, and which God will always accept and reward. And the contrary Practice of Intemperance, Unrighteouſneſs, and Ungodlineſs, without any Senſe, Awe, or Fear of God, is that *Infidelity*, or *Unfaithfulneſs*, which God will highly reſent and puniſh. Had the Author kept to this only Scripture-Senſe and Acceptation of the Words, in their Moral Uſe and Application, he had ſhewn himſelf a much wiſer Man, and better Divine: But his uſing the Words in the natural,

natural, hiſtorical Senſe, and applying it to the Moral Character, muſt give any one a ſhrewd Suſpicion, that he is acting a Part which will not bear the Light, and which he cannot be convicted of without bluſhing.

The Gentlemen who would ſeem ſo infinitely zealous for *ſupernatural Doctrines*, or Doctrines of immediate Inſpiration and Revelation, which muſt otherwiſe have been abſolutely above and beyond any Inveſtigation or Judgment of *human Reaſon*, they would do well, I ſay, to come out of the Clouds, and tell us openly and honeſtly what thoſe Doctrines are, and after what Manner, or upon what rational Principles, they are neceſſarily connected with *true Religion*. But their great Modeſty and Shyneſs in this Caſe, makes it evident, that their Zeal is only in Appearance, and that they only put it on as a Diſguiſe, and to ſerve a private Turn, which they would not have the *believing Laity* take

Notice of, or look into. Such Spiritual Guides make it plain, that while they are crying out againſt *Infidelity*, they have not themſelves *divine Faith* enough to ſpeak out their Minds, and to lead the People with Honour and Integrity in the Way of Truth, without Hope of Reward or Fear of Puniſhment from *Man*. Their Sophiſtry muſt be Reaſon, their Evaſions Faith, their Cowardiſe and Temporizing human Prudence, and their very Ignorance and Air of Importance Divine Knowledge. But Thanks be to God that the Laity begin to open their Eyes, and to ſee the Difference between Eccleſiaſtical Realities and Appearances. I had granted the moderate Part of the Proteſtant Clergy, at leaſt, every Thing in Religion that they could prove, as of any Uſe or Conſequence to Mankind. But this, it ſeems, was doing Nothing, unleſs I could have gone a little farther with them, and run into all their doctrinal Inconſiſtencies, which I am well

aſſured

assured I shall never do, nor will they be ever able by any Stress of Argument to force me to it.

It must be owned, the moderate Part of the Dissenting Clergy are under some peculiar Difficulties with Regard to their own People, who are generally from the oldest Man or Woman to the youngest Catechumen, Theorists and Adepts in *Religion*, especially the lower and less thinking Sort, who are always wisest in these Matters. They can teach their Teachers, and will be instructed only in their own Way. This is, doubtless, their Unhappiness, and owing to the Prejudice and Power of Education. But humouring them in this, and flattering and soothing them on in their Ignorance, Conceit, and Error, can scarcely consist with the Character of a Gospel-Minister. And therefore they who would make their Advantage of this popular Ignorance and Prejudice, against such of their Brethren as would go farther, and act

more uprightly, muſt be looked upon as the very worſt and moſt complicated *Impoſtors*. The common People are every Way capable of being inſtructed in the grand important Points and Doctrines of Temperance, Righteouſneſs, and Godlineſs, but they are hardly capable of being made Metaphyſicians and School-Divines, or of being inſtructed in the Principles of ſpiritual, incomprehenſible, and ſupernatural Religion, which is the great Art and Study of thoſe who aim at ſecuring to themſelves an orthodox Reputation, at the Expence of common Senſe, and of all Moral Truth and Righteouſneſs. With theſe Men Myſtery is Religion, and wild Enthuſiaſm is true Devotion.

The different Nature, Ends, and Purpoſes of Religion, and Superſtition, is a Matter of the utmoſt Importance, without which, as being duly conſidered and rightly underſtood, the Reader can form no juſt Idea of this Controverſy.

Religion

Religion is a clear, rational, intelligible Thing, moſt adequate to the natural Capacity, Reaſon, and Underſtanding of Man, and wants nothing but ſober, impartial, Conſideration to prove and recommend it. It conſiſts in the filial Love and Fear of God, and the brotherly Love of Mankind, exerting and diſcovering itſelf in the Practice of the ſeveral Duties and Obligations of Moral Truth and Righteouſneſs, from the Senſe and Influence of God's continual Power, Preſence, and Inſpection of our Actions, as the Rewarder of good, and Puniſher of bad Men. But *Superſtition* is a blind, implicit Principle of Obedience, grounded on the Pretence of Divine Authority, without any Foundation in the Nature, Reaſon, or Fitneſs of Things. Religion is ſeated in the Underſtanding and the Heart of Man, and by its native Power and Energy enlightens the Mind, and purifies the Affections; but Superſtition reſides in the

bodily Senſes and Paſſions, and exerts itſelf in furious Outcries, unmeaning Sounds, and blind Zeal. Or, in ſhort, Religion is Reaſon and Common Senſe, but Superſtition is ſpiritual Noiſe and Nonſenſe. And from hence it is plain, that Religion is purely an internal Thing, and conſiſts in a Temper, Habit, and Diſpoſition of the Mind, but Superſtition is merely external, and is confined to bodily Exerciſe, and external Actions, or to bare ſpeculative Opinions, that cannot affect any Man's Moral Character. And conſequently the very Nature and Eſſence of Superſtition lies, in ſubſtituting ſomething for Religion which cannot poſſibly be the Thing itſelf, and thereby making a Matter of Religion and Conſcience of ſomething merely indifferent. Superſtition therefore is not properly the entire Subverſion of Religion, or the total Abſence and Denial of it, but ſomething built upon, and ſuperadded to it, which does not really belong to it, and which has

has no natural Relation to, or Connexion with, it. And from hence we ſeldom find much *Superſtition* without ſome *Religion*, though they are generally confounded and paſs undiſtinguiſhed one for the other. And from hence have ariſen all the Conteſts in the Chriſtian World about Religion. For it is not really Religion itſelf, but Superſtition that is the Thing in Debate.

Thus ſome will not ſit, and others will not kneel, at a particular Act of Devotion; ſome are for the Religion of Cloaks, or grey Coats, and others for the Religion of Gowns, Caſſocks, and Surplices; ſome are for the Religion of Extempore Prayer, and others for the Religion of a Book; ſome are for the Religion of one outward indifferent Form or Mode of Worſhip, and ſome for another, when they are both equally indifferent, and there is no Religion in either, or in one more than the other.

ther. And thus we are continually fighting and contending in the Dark, not about *Religion*, but *Superſtition*. To impoſe ſuch Things under civil Penalties, as Matters of Religion and Conſcience, is Superſtition aggravated with Tyranny and Injuſtice; and to refuſe a Compliance with them as Matters of Religion and Conſcience, when they are not impoſed or required as ſuch, is Superſtition made ſtill more ridiculous by an additional Weakneſs and Miſapprehenſion.

Before I had finiſhed my Anſwer to Mr *Leland*, Mr *Chapman*'s Book came to Hand, intitled, *Euſebius, or the true Chriſtian's Defence*, &c. this Gentleman writes with much more Candour and Caution than my other Adverſary; but as he had eſpouſed the ſame Cauſe, his Argument could not be much different. As to what I obſerved peculiar in *Euſebius*,

ſebius, and thought might deſerve ſome farther Conſideration, I have taken Notice of it in a Letter to him annexed at the End. This learned Writer has intirely dropt the Argument of the *Moral Philoſopher*, ſo far as it relates to the *divine Legation* or *Authority* of *Moſes*. And he might probably leave this Part of the Controverſy to the moſt judicious and juſtly celebrated Mr *Warburton*, who had undertaken it before, though he is not yet come to it. But *Euſebius* confines himſelf chiefly in this firſt Volume to the Argument of *Miracles*, as a Proof of *Revelation above Reaſon*. But this I had ſo largely conſidered before in my Reply to Mr *Leland*, that I ſhould have thought nothing farther neceſſary, had it not been in Point of Compliment or Ceremony to ſo learned and candid an Author. This Gentleman has likewiſe made ſome Attempt to prove the literal Accompliſhment of the Prophecies, or that Jeſus Chriſt the common

common Saviour of the World, by a new Law of his own, was the true *Jewiſh Meſſiah*, according to the *Prophets*. How far he has ſucceeded in this muſt be left to the Judgment of the Reader, but I think I have ſaid enough to ſhew that he is greatly miſtaken.

But I have one general Complaint to make againſt both my learned Adverſaries, and for which I muſt appeal to the Public. It is this, that they have filled up their reſpective Volumes only with Declamations and Harangues upon common Topicks, without ever touching upon the great Difficulties, or once coming Home to the main Points in Debate, and which I take to be theſe two: *Firſt*, The *Infallibility* or *immediate divine Inſpiration* of the Biblical Penmen in all their Opinions and Practices, or in every Thing they have delivered down to us, whether Hiſtorical, Moral, or Prophetic. And, *Secondly*,

The

The *real Diſtinction* or *eſſential Difference* between *Natural* and *Revealed* Religion, and what thoſe *revealed Doctrines* preciſely and determinately are, which muſt be proved by Miracles abſtracted from any prior, rational Evidence to, or Connexion of, Ideas in the Underſtanding. The Intelligent Reader will always keep theſe two grand Points in View, and then he will eaſily judge of the whole Argument on both Sides. But the Gentlemen on the other Side, have generally endeavoured to make good their Argument, by appealing to the Paſſions of the Populace, and condemning as Antichriſtian, Free-Thinkers, Deiſts, and Infidels, all thoſe who are not of their Mind. They have been always very ſenſible of their Strength in this, and ſhould they once loſe this Hold, I doubt they muſt loſe their Cauſe. But whatever may be the Event as to this,

I have

I have nothing more here to add, but to ſubſcribe myſelf the candid Reader's

Moſt obedient

Feb. 10.
1738-9.

humble Servant,

PHILALETHES.

THE

INTRODUCTION.

INtending a particular and impartial Examination of what the Reverend Mr *Leland* has offered, in Oppoſition to the Principles and Poſitions contained in the *Moral Philoſopher*; I ſhall take leave, in the firſt place, to ſettle the general Account between him and me, by which the Reader will be the better able to judge of the true State of the Controverſy, and of the Ability, Candor, and Juſtice, of this Author, in his Management of it.

He has writ a large Volume of two or three and thirty Sheets, in Defence of *Chriſtianity* and *Revelation*, as he pretends; but without ſo much as letting us know what he means by the Words, what this Revelation is, or what its peculiar Doctrines and Duties are. He has not once defin'd or aſcertain'd that *Faith* which he oppoſes to *Infidelity*, whilſt he is continually beſtirring himſelf in the dark, and flinging about his Squibs at *Infidels*. 'Tis certain, that grand eſſential Article of all religious Faith, that *God is, and that he is the Rewarder of ſuch as diligently ſeek him*, is not the Faith which he oppoſes to Infidelity, nor has his Anti-infidel Faith any Relation to, or Connexion with, this. The filial Love and Fear of God, and the brotherly Love of Mankind, grounded upon the firm Belief of all the Divine Perfections, and particularly a Truſt in God, as the Re-

warder of good and Puniſher of bad Men; all this, I ſay, is no Part of his Anti-infidel Faith; for a Man may believe and do all this, and yet, in his Account, be an Infidel, an Enemy to Religion, and a wicked Oppoſer of Revelation. He ought therefore clearly to have defin'd this Anti-infidel or Revelation-Faith of his, and proved the Reaſonableneſs, Neceſſity, and Importance, of it, before he made ſuch a blind, uncharitable, and moſt unchriſtian Uſe of it. This, one would think, might have been juſtly expected from him, but perhaps he knew his Buſineſs better, and was too much a Maſter of the Art of unfair writing, and appealing to the Paſſions, without correcting the Judgment or informing the Underſtanding.

Had this Gentleman but Courage and Honeſty enough to ſpeak out, I doubt not but he would declare, that by the Faith he contends for, and which he thinks neceſſary and fundamental to Chriſtianity, he means, a firm indubitable Belief, or Perſuaſion, that the whole Jewiſh and Chriſtian Hiſtory contain'd in the Books of the Old and New Teſtaments, is infallibly and certainly true; eſpecially that Part of it which relates to Prophecy, Miracles, Ghoſts, Apparitions, and other ſupernatural and ſuper-rational Facts. And ſince the Hiſtorians in all this were immediately inſpired, and ſo far under the Direction of the Holy Ghoſt that they could not err, to doubt of or reject any Part of it, would be to reject the whole, and overthrow all Revelation: This I take to be the

the *Faith* which he oppoſes to *Infidelity*. He who has this Faith is a ſound Believer, and whoever wants it is a ſyſtematical Infidel, and ought to be baited and run down by popular Outrage and Orthodox Fury. But would any wiſe Man, who was really a Friend to any Religion, place it upon a Bottom ſo very weak, precarious, and uncertain? Or could any the worſt Enemy to Chriſtianity, contriving to expoſe and betray it, have done it more effectually? And does he not ſee what an Advantage he has hereby given to Atheiſts and real Infidels? For in this Caſe, if they can give any plain Inſtances, or Proofs, of Errors, Miſtakes, or Inconſiſtencies, in the ſacred Writers, it will be enough to ſet aſide their Inſpiration and immediate divine Authority; for if they were not infallible in one Caſe, they might not in another; and if they were not immediately inſpired in hiſtorical Matters, who can prove that they were in Doctrinals? And ſuch are the wretched Shifts to which all theſe muſt be driven, who place Infallibility and Certainty in any thing elſe but the neceſſary immutable Truth, Reaſon, and Fitneſs of Things. I think nothing can be plainer than this, that there is no ſuch thing as *hiſtorical Infallibility*, but that all Men are liable to Error, not only in remote Facts and ſupernatural Events, but even with regard to the moſt common Affairs, and things near at hand. Now had this Author been a fair Adverſary, he would either have granted or denied this; and in Caſe of denying it, he would have attempted

to prove the contrary; at leaſt with regard to the Sacred Hiſtorians. But he has done neither, and yet argues all along upon a tacit Suppoſition of ſuch Infallibility, as if it had been a Matter of Demonſtration: This perhaps may look ſomewhat extraordinary, but the Neceſſity the Author was under is viſible enough, and I ſhall have ſufficient Occaſion afterwards to exemplify his Conduct herein.

But I am very ſure, that this hiſtorical Infallibility, and contradictory Suppoſition of a human-divine Authority, cannot be that eternal, impregnable Rock upon which Chriſt has built his Church, and againſt which all the Powers of Earth and Hell can never prevail. This can be nothing elſe but the eternal immutable Truth, Reaſon, and Moral Fitneſs of the Doctrines themſelves, as bearing the intrinſic Character and Stamp of Divine Truth and Authority; and therefore certainly thoſe hiſtorical, ſyſtematical Schemes, and human Projections, which are ſo often ſhaken, and always in Danger, can never be founded upon this immovable Rock. It is true indeed, that Hiſtory and human Teſtimony bring theſe Doctrines down to us, and propoſe them to our Conſideration; but this is not, or ought not to be, the Ground of their Reception; we believe them becauſe they bring their own Credentials with them, in the intrinſic Moral Character and Stamp of Divinity, and not upon the Credit or Authority of any hiſtorical Vouchers, or living deciſive Judges whatever.

I had laid it down, not as a mere Poſtulatum, but as a Principle of Reaſon, which I endeavoured to prove and exemplify throughout the Book, that *Natural and Reveal'd Religion, as to their Subject-Matter, are one and the ſame*, and are diſtinguiſh'd only with regard to the different Method of teaching, or Manner of Conveyance. The Author through all his long Declamations, neither grants nor denies this directly; tho' it is plain all along, that, without making himſelf accountable for the Proof, he ſuppoſes the contrary; and indeed if he had ſuppoſed nothing without Proof, he would have given me but very little Trouble.

The Author builds his whole Scheme upon Authority, Divine Authority as he pretends. But what is the Ground of this Authority, and how does he prove it to be divine? Not ſurely from the Power of working Miracles, for this could no more prove the divine Authority of *Moſes* or *Chriſt*, than of the *Egyptian* Sorcerers. It is not the Power therefore, however great and ſupernatural, that can prove either the Goodneſs of the Perſons or Truth of the Doctrines. But the Truth of the Matter ſeems to be this, That the Tree is known by its Fruits; and therefore he that does Good by beneficent Actions is good, and a Friend to Mankind, whether he does it by the Exerciſe of a natural or ſupernatural Power; and the only Difference is, that one enables him to do more Good than the other. But ſtill, ſuch Beneficence, tho' exerted and extended by a miraculous and ſu-

pernatural Power, can never prove the infallible Truth or Certainty of any Doctrines that ſhould be taught and propagated by ſuch a Perſon; the Doctrines themſelves, by their own intrinſic moral Character, muſt prove this, if ever it is prov'd at all. The Truth, Certainty, and Importance of the Doctrines, prove the Authority of the Perſon as divine; but not the Authority of the Perſon the Truth of the Doctrines. Truth is prior in Nature to all Authority, and therefore Authority cannot be the prior Ground and Reaſon of Truth. Theſe things are ſo very ſtrong and clear, that the Author could not meddle with the Principles themſelves, and dared not contradict or argue againſt them directly; and has therefore left all the Principles of the Book, which he pretended to anſwer, in their full Force.

As this Writer could not explain himſelf concerning that Faith which he oppoſes to Infidelity, and which he ſuppoſes to be the Belief of Revelation; ſo he has left us altogether as much in the dark about Revelation itſelf, which he could not explain, or give us any Idea of. If the Revelation conſiſts in the Moral Doctrines and Obligations of Scripture, all Morality will be Revelation; or if it conſiſts in the hiſtorical Facts, all Hiſtory will be Revelation: But if it neither conſiſts in the Moral Doctrines, nor hiſtorical Facts, I wonder where he will find it! At this rate he muſt go out of the Bible, and look for his Revelation ſomewhere elſe. By Revelation one would think ſhould be underſtood

derſtood the Diſcovery of ſome new Doctrines or Duties in Religion, that had never been known before, and which were above the Search or Inveſtigation of human Reaſon; in this Senſe it has been commonly repreſented by the Learned, and conceiv'd and apply'd by the vulgar and unlearned; tho' as thus taken and underſtood, it will have but very little or no Foundation in the New Teſtament.

Chriſt himſelf continually appeals to *Moſes* and the Prophets, for the Truth of his Doctrines of Moral Rectitude, Peace, and Righteouſneſs, and more than once declares, that he came not to deſtroy and ſet aſide the *Law*, i. e. the *Moral Law*, or to introduce any *new Religion*, or Terms of Juſtification and Acceptance with God. And St *Paul*, his great Expoſitor and Interpreter, and who was the only Apoſtle that had any Authority or Commiſſion to preach the Goſpel among the Gentiles, makes it his chief Buſineſs in all his Epiſtles to ſhew, that there was no *new Religion*, or *new Revelation* intended to be ſet up, but that the whole Deſign of this new Diſpenſation, and of Chriſt's Miſſion and coming into the World, was to reſtore the old Religion, and the true Abrahamic Righteouſneſs, that had taken place before the giving of the Law, and by which *Abraham*, *Noah*, *Enoch*, and all good Men, from the Beginning of the World, had been juſtify'd and accepted of God. And this juſtifying acceptable Righteouſneſs, was the filial Love of God, and bro-

therly Love of Mankind, the *doing Juſtice, loving Mercy, and walking humbly with God*; or *denying all Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in the World.* The Faith which was intended to be introduced and eſtabliſhed by this *new Diſpenſation*, or *old Religion revived*, was that Faith which makes and denominates Men *faithful*, and the Want of Faith, or Infidelity, was always the Want of Fidelity, or Faithfulneſs, with reſpect to the filial Love of God, and the brotherly Love of Mankind, and ſuch Acts of Moral Truth and Righteouſneſs as muſt flow from it. Now in all this ſaving, juſtifying Scheme, there is not one Word or Tittle of an hiſtorical Faith, nor is Hiſtory any otherwiſe apply'd, than as it was neceſſary to prove what was the true original Religion, and Means of Acceptance with God; and this to thoſe who believ'd the hiſtorical Account before. But in this Caſe, none were ever blamed or condemn'd for not believing the Hiſtory, nor was the Hiſtory ever quoted or urged againſt any, but thoſe who believed it before, or profeſſed ſo to do; and even then it could ſerve to no other End or Purpoſe, but, as an Argument *ad hominem*, to convict and condemn Men upon their own Principles and Conceſſions.

This I hope may be ſufficient to diſtinguiſh between a mere hiſtorical Faith, and that moral fiducial Truſt in, and Dependance upon, God, as the Preſerver, Guardian, and Rewarder of good Men, which is the only Notion of Faith,

Faith, in any ſcriptural, religious, or moral Senſe. An hiſtorical Faith may diſtinguiſh between a wiſe Man and a Fool, but never between a good Man and a bad. Under this Notion *Credulity* is more dangerous than *Incredulity*, as it renders a Man more liable to be impoſed on himſelf, and to impoſe upon others. But Credulity and Incredulity, with Submiſſion to our ſyſtematical Divines, are infinitely and eſſentially different from *Fidelity* and *Infidelity*; they may confound theſe Diſparates and Oppoſites in their Quarrels and Controverſies one among another, but they can gain nothing by ſuch learned School-Play with the reſt of the World, or ever make us believe that Credulity and Incredulity, are the ſame thing with Fidelity and Infidelity, or Faithfulneſs and Unfaithfulneſs.

This learned Writer knew very well, that he could not confute any one general Principle or Poſition in the *Moral Philoſopher*; but he thought himſelf very well qualify'd to confute the Application I had made to the hiſtorical Parts of Scripture; and here it is that he bends all his Nerves, and exerts his utmoſt Force. I am ſo far from declining the Combat he has call'd me to, that I am very glad of the Opportunity he has offered me, to enter farther into that Affair, and to give him all the Satisfaction I am able about it. And to ſhew how ready I am to oblige him, I ſhall follow him in his own Method, and conſider his ſeveral Objections

jections according to the Order in which he has placed them.

But before I come to this, I must here once more solemnly declare, that I had no other View or Aim in writing the Book which has given him so much Offence, but to serve and promote the Cause of *Truth*, *Peace*, and *Righteousness*, and to separate *Religion*, true Religion, from that *Superstition* which has always prov'd the Bane and Destruction of it. Superstition is the counterfeit Image, and mock Appearance of Religion, and must therefore be infinitely mischievous wherever it comes to be mistaken and substituted for the thing itself. As the *Christian* Religion is certainly the best in the World, so the Christian *Superstition* is certainly the worst, and has proved more destructive to Mankind than any other. And I hope I shall never be ashamed or afraid to distinguish between these two, and, as well as I can, mark out their Boundaries.

As to this Author's Indignation, and repeated Imputations of *Artifice*, *Malice*, *inveterate Spite*, Enmity to Revelation, *&c.* I can bear it all with Patience, as having been pretty much used to such sort of Treatment, and can expect no other from Men of his *Reach*, *Capacity*, and *Charity*. But whether he or I have done most to discourage Truth and free Inquiry, and to support the Implicitism, Presumption, and groundless Hopes of mere nominal Christians, will appear farther in the Course of this Detail.

A

VINDICATION

OF

Moral Truth and *Reaſon.*

SECT. I.

The Author's Suppoſition of Immediate Revelation and the Doctrines thereon depending, as prov'd by external ſenſible Appearances, abſtracted from the rational Evidence, or Connexion of Ideas in the Underſtanding, ſhewn to be weak, vain, and inſufficient.

The Nature of Truth, and the ſeveral Grounds of its Communicability conſidered. Truth founded in Nature and Reaſon communicable by its own Evidence to the Underſtanding. Truth in Fact by Teſtimony. Truth which is abſolutely above and beyond all Inveſtigation of Reaſon, or Perception of Senſes, not communicable at all, but by immediate, perſonal Inſpiration or Revelation.

The

The Evidence of Miracles, as the proper Foundation and Proof of Doctrines which are absolutely beyond the Search and Inveſtigation of human Reaſon, throughly examined, and the Author's Pleas and Pretenſions for it conſidered.

I Had laid down as a Principle, that we can have no certain Mark or Criterion of divine or moral Truth, or of Truth as coming from God, and diſcovering his Will concerning our Duty; but the moral Reaſon and Fitneſs of the Thing, or its Relation to and Connexion with our Happineſs. But this Author for ſeveral Pages together pretends to be under the greateſt Uncertainty about the Meaning of this, and puts ſeveral Suppoſitions, as if it had been one of the moſt perplexed and unintelligible Propoſitions he had ever met with; but I believe in Reality he was not ſo much at a Loſs to find out the Meaning, as what to do with it when he had got it. But *pag.* 10. he is pleaſed to bring himſelf out of his own Confuſion, and *to take it as if I had ſaid, that the Reaſonableneſs of the Doctrine itſelf, as appearing to the Underſtanding, is the only Evidence of its being a divine Truth, or of its coming from God.* This is ſhrewdly gueſſed indeed. But then, *here again it may be aſked, what he means by a divine Truth, or a Truth as coming from God? Does he mean a Truth that came by immediate Revelation from God? So he ought to mean, if he would ſpeak to the Purpoſe.* But I had no Occaſion to ſay this, it not being to my Purpoſe; and I was not obliged

obliged to follow his Purpoſes, eſpecially before I knew them. But he adds a Reaſon, *Since the Queſtion is, as he himſelf ſeems to put it, concerning the proper Proofs and Evidences of a divine Revelation*, or how we may know that a Doctrine is *revealed from God*. This Author it ſeems cannot diſtinguiſh between mediate and immediate Revelation; but all Truth coming from God muſt be by *Inſpiration* or *immediate Revelation*. But if this be ſo, I preſume he and I never received any Revelation or Truth from God; ſince I hope he would not pretend to Inſpiration or immediate Revelation himſelf. But he will ſay doubtleſs, that all *divine Truth, or Truth coming from God*, muſt have been given by Inſpiration or immediate Revelation at firſt, tho' it may come to us through a long Succeſſion of intermediate Conveyers. But ſuppoſe theſe intermediate Conveyers, as not being inſpired or infallible themſelves, ſhould miſtake the Senſe of the firſt Promulgers, or give us a wrong Account of it? In this Caſe, there muſt be either ſome prior and ſuperior Rule and Criterion of Truth, whereby to judge of the Will of God concerning our Duty and Happineſs, or elſe, the whole of Chriſtianity and Revelation muſt be left to the Uncertainty and infinite Confuſion of Hiſtory and human fallible Teſtimony, abſtracted from the natural Tendency or moral Fitneſs of Actions, as conducible to true Happineſs. But this, as I imagine, would be but a ſandy Foundation for divine Truth, and ſuch as no wiſe Man would venture any valuable,

valuable, temporal Intereſt upon, and much leſs his eternal Salvation. As to this ſuppoſed poſitive Religion founded upon mere Authority, without any other or farther Reaſon, which is what this Author ſeems to mean by *Revelation*, there is not any one Point or Article of it in which Men have not been irreconcileably divided, and ſtill remain ſo; and therefore a Man might as well caſt Lots for his Faith and Religion, or put it to any Trial of Hap-hazard, as reſt it upon ſuch a footing.

Pag. 11. The Author comes to the two main Queſtions which are to be diſtinctly conſidered. *The one is, Whether thoſe to whom the original Revelation is immediately made, may have a ſufficient Certainty, that what they receive by immediate Inſpiration, is indeed a Revelation from God. The other, Whether other Perſons, beſides thoſe to whom the original Revelation was made, may have a ſufficient Ground of reaſonable Aſſurance, that what thoſe Perſons publiſhed to the World as by Revelation from God, is indeed a Revelation from God, and is therefore to be received and ſubmitted to as ſuch.* Theſe are indeed two very important Queſtions, and I ſhall attend to the Author's Reaſonings about them the more carefully, becauſe the whole Controverſy between him and me muſt in a Manner depend upon it. That God then may immediately and directly, if he pleaſes, communicate his Mind and Will concerning our Duty and Happineſs to any Man, or Number of Men, and enable them to communicate the ſame to others

others upon ſufficient Grounds of Belief, I readily grant, and ſo far this learned Man and I are agreed. But the only Difference is concerning the Nature, Foundation and Reaſon of this Communication or Communicability of *divine Truth*, or Truth which relates to our Duty and Happineſs, in Obedience to the Will of God; and herein there ſeems to be the greateſt Diſtance poſſible between this Author and me.

The different Nature of Truth, and Manner of communicating from one Man to another, in a human Way of Conveyance, is a Matter of the utmoſt Conſequence, upon which all Science, Religion, Morality, and Hiſtory muſt depend; and yet this has been very little conſidered or underſtood, eſpecially by the ſcholaſtick ſyſtematical Divines, who, under a Pretence of more Learning or clearer Illumination than others, have never failed to perplex and confound Mankind about Religion, as if it was a Thing contrived on Purpoſe to be always talked of and contended for, but never underſtood. But amidſt all this Confuſion, I think it is very plain, that whatever is true to us, or true to human Underſtanding, muſt be either *ſcientifically* true, or true in *Fact*. The one depends on the abſtract Nature and Reaſon of Things, as eternally neceſſarily and immutably the ſame; the other, upon the Perception of the Senſes originally and immediately, and mediately upon the credible Teſtimony and Atteſtation of thoſe original Perceptions and Facts, to thoſe who were not

the

the Eye or Ear-Witneſſes. Theſe, I think, are the two different Sources of Truth, and Methods of conveying it, ſo far as human Underſtanding is capable of being inform'd in a natural Way. The Truths of the firſt Claſs, or ſuch as are ſcientific, being eternal and immutable, as founded in the neceſſary Relations of things, in the Agreement or Diſagreement of their Ideas, muſt appear to all Underſtandings alike, and always the ſame, when once they come to be propoſed in their natural Order, and perceiv'd by the Mind. In this Caſe Truth is to the Underſtanding, what viſible Objects are to the Eye when ſet in a due Light, and at their proper Diſtance. This ſcientific Truth has been commonly diſtinguiſh'd into *Natural* and *Moral:* The firſt includes ſuch ſcientific Truths as have no direct immediate Relation to *Moral Practice*, and therefore cannot affect a Man's moral Character, or denominate him in this Senſe *good* or *bad*, *virtuous* or *vitious*, ſuch as are the Truths and Principles of the Mathematics, and Natural Philoſophy. But ſcientific moral Truth is that which relates to moral Practice, and diſcovers to us the neceſſary Relations and Qualifications of Actions, as they are connected with our Happineſs and well-being, and ſuch are the Truths concerning the Being and Perfections of God, and our neceſſary Relation to him as his Creatures, Subjects, and abſolute Dependents, from whence we derive our very Exiſtence, and all our Happineſs or Capacity, and Poſſibility of Happineſs.

And

And from hence clearly and neceſſarily follow the moral Obligations we are under, of owning him in theſe natural neceſſary Relations, and of imitating him to the utmoſt of our Power and Capacity in all his moral Perfections of Truth and Juſtice, Mercy, Beneficence, and Charity, *&c.* theſe neceſſary natural Relations which we ſtand in to the ſupreme Being, and the neceſſary moral Reaſon and Fitneſs of the ſeveral Obligations toward God and Man from thence ariſing as before-mentioned, is a certain Proof to us, that ſuch moral Conduct is our Duty by the poſitive Will and Law of God; ſince he cannot but will according to Righteouſneſs, Juſtice, and Truth, as founded in the neceſſary natural Reaſon and Relations of Things. And if he is thus in theNature and Reaſon of Things, the wiſe and righteous Governor of the World, it is certain that he will reward good Men, and puniſh the wicked, as Reaſon and Juſtice require. And this is a more certain and infallible Manifeſtation and Revelation of God to Man, than any hiſtorical Proof can amount to.

This moral Truth, or the Reaſon and Fitneſs of Actions, as founded in the Nature of Things, and as neceſſarily related to, and connected with, the Happineſs of moral Agents, is what I, with others, call divine Truth, or Truth coming from God; the antient ſacred Moraliſts called it emphatically, and by Way of Eminence, *Wiſdom*, or *divine Knowledge*, and they who were moſt eminent and remarkable for the Study, Improvement, and Application of

this divine Truth and Knowledge, or ſpiritual Wiſdom, were looked upon as inſpired and taught of God. And I take it as certain, that this is the moſt peculiar Mark of *divine Favour*, and the ſpecial Act of *divine Aſſiſtance*, whether it comes from God mediately or immediately.

But the other Claſs of Truth which I mentioned is Truth in Fact, or ſuch as is perceived and manifeſted by the Senſes. The higheſt Evidence or Proof of this Kind is the immediate Perception of the Senſes under ſuch Circumſtances of Perſons, Facts, and Objects, as leave no room to doubt of any Deception. But below this, the Degrees and natural Grounds of Probability are vaſtly different, and ſuch as need not be inſiſted on here.

But our ſpiritual Scholaſtics, or ſyſtematical Divines, have found out a third Set or Claſs of communicable Truths, which are neither ſcientific nor hiſtorical, and which cannot be derived either from our Reaſon or Senſes; and this they call *Inſpiration*, or *immediate Revelation*. In Conſequence of this, beſides Matters of Reaſon and Matters of Fact, they have their Matters of *Faith*, *divine Faith*, which are not properly the Objects either of Reaſon or Senſe, but of this *divine Faith* as a Faculty, Principle, or Gift of perceiving and judging of Things above all human Reaſon or Senſe. And from hence as natural Reaſon and Senſe are neceſſary to perceive and judge of their proper and reſpective Objects, ſo the ſupernatural Illumination of the Spirit is neceſſary in order to a right Perception

Perception and Judgment of the Matters and Objects of this ſpiritual and divine Faith. This is the common Cant of thoſe Men, which I ſhall conſider and examine a little farther.

In the firſt Place then, 'tis I think very plain, that any Truths or Doctrines which depend intirely on immediate Inſpiration or Revelation, and which are above and beyond the Inveſtigation, Search, Perception, or Judgment of natural Reaſon, muſt require a ſupernatural Light or Illumination to perceive and judge of them. And therefore they who have aſſerted the Neceſſity of a perſonal Inſpiration, or ſupernatural ſpiritual Illumination of every Man, in order to perceive and judge of theſe Doctrines and Truths of immediate Revelation, have been conſiſtent with themſelves, and proceeded upon the only Suppoſition that can render their Principles ſo much as intelligible. The natural Reaſon and Underſtanding of Man can perceive or judge no more about theſe ſupernatural Truths and Doctrines, than a blind Man can of Light, or a deaf Man of Sounds. And therefore when you talk to them of theſe Matters, upon the Principles of Reaſon, you only move their Compaſſion or Indignation to find that you have no better or higher Light, and that you ſhould pretend to judge of ſpiritual Objects and Matters of divine Faith, without a ſpiritual Faculty or Gift of Diſcernment. But there are others, who, tho' they talk much in the ſame Way, and really proceed upon the ſame Principles, would yet ſeem to be more rational. It

is true ſay they, That the Truths and Doctrines of pure Revelation, or the Doctrines of revealed Religion, as diſtinguiſhed from the Religion of Nature, could not have been known at firſt, but by an immediate Inſpiration or Revelation from God; but then, when once they are thus diſcovered and made known, the common Reaſon of Man, may ſo far perceive and judge of them, as to have ſufficient Grounds for receiving and believing them, as coming from God, and depending on *divine Authority*. Thus the Matter is repreſented by thoſe who would be thought in good Meaſure *Rationaliſts*, and who would not quite loſe and confound themſelves in the dazling overpowering Light of *divine Enthuſiaſm*. This may look plauſible, and is the common Way of getting off, and yet when it comes to be examined, it will appear to be no better grounded than the other Suppoſition of a perſonal Inſpiration, or ſupernatural Faith, Illumination, and Gift of Diſcernment. For I would here aſk, what this ſuppoſed divine Authority, by which we muſt judge of the Will of God concerning our Duty, is founded upon? Not ſurely on the prior Nature and Reaſon of Things, or the moral Fitneſs of Actions, as conſtituting our moral Rectitude, and therefore neceſſarily connected with our Happineſs. This indeed would be a Demonſtration and Manifeſtation of their being agreeable to the Will of God. But then this would be making the Authority depend on the prior Nature and Reaſon of Things, and Fitneſs of the Actions, and not

not ſuch Reaſon and Fitneſs upon the Authority, which in this Caſe would be contrary to the Suppoſition. Theſe Gentlemen therefore ought to prove their ſuppoſed Authority from ſome Principle or other, that is antecedent to the Conſideration of any Truth, Reaſon, or Fitneſs of Things and Actions; and this can be only a perſonal Inſpiration, or ſupernatural Faith and Illumination of the Spirit, which they who are conſiſtent in this Way always aſſert and ſtand to. The compounding Gentlemen therefore who have endeavoured to ſtrike out a new Way between the two Schemes have been moſt of all miſtaken, and, by halving and mincing the Matter, have left themſelves no ſolid Ground or footing at all.

The great Queſtion here is, whether God has revealed ſuch a Thing as true, or required it as a Duty? And in this Caſe, it would be moſt abſurd and prepoſterous to urge the Authority of God for it, becauſe this is the very Point in Queſtion, whether God has revealed the Thing as a Truth, or commanded it as a Duty or not; and no Authority either divine or human can prove itſelf. And it is very plain, that Truth is in its own Nature, and the Reaſon of Things, prior to all Authority; and therefore cannot depend upon it, or be proved by it. Now it is certain, that immediate Inſpiration or Revelation cannot be the Object of our Senſes, ſince *no Man has ſeen God at any Time, or heard his Voice*; and it is allowed not to be a Matter of Science, or communicable by any natural Relation and

rational Connexion of Ideas, as this would make it a Part of natural Religion, and therefore it cannot be known or communicated at all, but by a perſonal Inſpiration, or ſupernatural Illumination, which theſe Gentlemen, at leaſt ſome of them, would not pretend to; tho' nothing leſs than this, and the clear rational Proof of it, can ſerve their Purpoſe. The Certainty and Communicability of immediate Inſpiration, or Revelation, above Reaſon, could never have been thought of, or found out, but by great *Neceſſity* which is the Mother of *Invention*. But the Scriptures I am ſure teach no ſuch Things, and therefore they who have contrived this new Spring and Fountain of *communicable Truth*, muſt take the Honour of it to themſelves as an Invention of their own.

Human Reaſon in Matters of Religion had been very much corrupted, blinded, and perverted, in all the former Ages, by the ſeveral Sorts of Idolatry, Superſtition, and falſe Religion, which had every where prevailed and been eſtabliſhed and ſecured by the Force of Civil Laws. In this State of Things Men were unavoidably kept in Ignorance; they groped in Darkneſs, and were under a Sort of Vaſſalage to the Devil and their own Luſts. But tho' Reaſon had been thus corrupted and abuſed, yet Men had not loſt the Faculty, and there wanted nothing but a right Method of teaching, in order to reſtore Mankind to the right Uſe of Reaſon in Matters of Religion, or the true Knowledge of God and themſelves, as relating to their Duty and Happineſs;

pineſs: I ſay a right Method of teaching, and the Liberty of preaching, propagating, receiving, and profeſſing the true Religion, were the great Obſtacles to it, and what kept the World in Darkneſs for ſo many Ages. Now the great and manifeſt Deſign of the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, was to bring Men from this groſs Ignorance and Darkneſs of Superſtition, to the true Knowledge of God and themſelves, relating to their Duty and Happineſs; and as this was brought about by a peculiar and extraordinary Providence, by Perſons furniſhed with Wiſdom and Knowledge, much ſuperior to the ignorant ſtupid World, and armed with Courage and Reſolution enough to venture their Lives, and propagate the true Religion in Oppoſition to all the Civil Powers and Laws then in Being: I ſay, ſuch a Revival and Propagation of the true Religion, or of Truth and Reaſon in Matters of Religion, may properly enough be called a Revelation from God, or Manifeſtation of Truth from him, who was certainly the Author and Director of ſo great a Reformation in the World. But then, what is true in Nature and Reaſon, as all Religion muſt, cannot depend on any Authority; ſince Truth is in its own Nature prior to all Authority, and without it no Authority can be proved.

Agreeably to this we always find our Saviour and the Apoſtles appealing to the Underſtandings and Reaſon of Men for the Truth of their Doctrines; and it was this intrinſic Force and Energy of Truth upon the Underſtandings and

Conſciences of the People that was the great Proof to them of Chriſt's being a true Prophet, and that his Doctrines muſt certainly be divine. This is the one and only certain Mark and Criterion of divine Truth, or Truth concerning the Will of God relating to our Duty and Happineſs; and there is no other Way of teaching and conveying it, in which we may not be liable to the groſſeſt Error, Impoſture, and Deception. Every Thing that is true at all, muſt be neceſſarily or contingently ſo, *i. e.* true in Reaſon, or true in Fact. They who place Religion upon the Foot of Authority, muſt do it upon the ſuppoſed certain Truth of this Propoſition, *That the Biblical Hiſtorians were all immediately inſpired, and conſequently infallible.* But how well this is proved, or what Sort of Foundation it is for Religion, will appear farther in due Place. What has been ſaid, may perhaps be ſufficient to let this Author ſee what I underſtand by *Revelation* or *Truth* as coming from *God*, ſo far as it is communicable to us without an immediate Revelation to ourſelves, concerning which he had affected to throw himſelf into great Doubts and Uncertainty about my Meaning. But I ſhall now follow him in his Reaſonings as they lie.

Page 15. *He comes to the ſecond Queſtion, in which he undertakes* to prove, *That there may be ſuch Proofs and Evidences given, that Perſons profeſſing to have received Doctrines and Laws from God for the Uſe of Mankind, were indeed ſent and inſpired by him, and did receive them by Revelation*

tion from him: Such Proofs and Evidences as make it reasonable for those to whom they are made known, to receive such Laws and Doctrines as of Divine Authority. I hope this Author does not think I am arguing against Possibilities, for I can assure him that I never do that, but where there is Demonstration on one Side, which I presume cannot here be pretended to. What God may do is one thing, and what he has or does do, another: I granted, or supposed, that God may, if he thinks fit, reveal a Truth to the Mind, so as to rest it purely upon his own Authority, without discovering it as true by any natural or rational Connexion of its Ideas, even tho' the thing itself be a natural Truth, and capable of Demonstration. I supposed this, because I knew, or could prove, nothing to the contrary. But then I am sure this Author cannot prove that this really is or ever was so in Fact. The Author every where affects to confound *Revelation, divine Truth*, or Truth coming from God in general, with *immediate Inspiration*, or *supernatural Illumination*; tho' he has no Mark, or Criterion, whereby to know or judge of this. We are very sure, that whoever has any Truth of vast Importance to Mankind to communicate, especially such as their eternal Happiness must depend on, must be *ipso facto* divinely commissioned, and under a necessary Obligation from God to publish and declare it, however he receiv'd or came by it, whether by the Strength and Superiority of his own natural Faculties, or by any more immediate

diate ſupernatural Illumination. Reaſon itſelf is a natural Revelation from God to Man, and the Revival or Recovery of loſt or neglected Truth, in Matters of the higeſt Importance to Mankind, may be properly call'd a particular Revelation, or extraordinary Manifeſtation of divine Truth, without entring into any Queſtion concerning the Manner of its Communication; of which we can know but very little, if any thing at all. But this we certainly know, that whatever is true in the Nature and Reaſon of Things, and neceſſary to our Happineſs, is the undoubted Will of God concerning our Duty. But the Author thinks he has another certain Mark and Criterion of Truth as coming from God, and neceſſary to our Happineſs; and that is divine Authority as proved by Miracles.

Now here I think nothing can be plainer than this, that the bare Power of working Miracles can be no Proof at all, either of the Truth of Doctrines, or any Authority or ſpecial Commiſſion that the Perſons have from God. The *Egyptian* Sorcerers, if the Account be true, wrought great Miracles; and they who could create a living Creature, and turn a Rod into a Serpent, might as well have made a World, raiſed the Dead, or done any thing elſe within the Compaſs of Power. It can ſignify nothing to ſay, that thoſe Sorcerers only wrought falſe or counterfeit Miracles, but the Miracles wrought by *Moſes* were true and real; ſince nothing appears from the Story itſelf, but that the Mi-

racles were of the ſame kind, and equally true on both Sides. And tho' *Moſes* wrought greater Miracles than they, this can only prove his greater Power or Skill, and that the Magicians were fairly out-done in their own Way. But it can no more prove any Commiſſion or divine Authority of *Moſes*, than if he had conquered them by Force of Arms, which the People would equally have aſcribed to the immediate Hand and Power of God on their Side, as they commonly did whenever they gain'd any great Advantage, either by Force or Fraud. Had *Moſes* himſelf conquered the *Egyptians* by Force of Arms, this muſt have been looked upon as very extraordinary, miraculous, and ſupernatural, tho' it could not have proved the Truth or Juſtice of the Conqueror's Cauſe. He might have been aſſiſted by ſome ſupernatural evil Power, ſince his Miracles were commonly wrought not for the Good but Deſtruction of Mankind, and this out of a particular Partiality in Favour of one Nation, who pretended to be the peculiar choſen People of God, while they were always the very worſt and wickedeſt Part of the World. Even under the Blaze of all theſe Miracles, and moſt aſtoniſhing Diſplays of divine Power, the ſtupid Herd had no ſooner paſs'd the Red-ſea, and gone a little Way into the Wilderneſs, but they made a Calf, and aſcribed their Deliverance to the Gods of *Egypt*; from whence one muſt conclude them more brutiſh than their Cattle, and not endued with any common Senſe or human Faculties.

culties. This was the great Advantage of ſuch an extraordinary Conduct towards them, and if one ſhould take thoſe *Hebrew* Hiſtorians in a literal Senſe, and out of the Allegory, there was ſcarce any ſuch thing as common Providence in that Nation, for above a thouſand Years together; but every thing which happened to them, came about in a miraculous and ſupernatural Way.

The *Hebrew* Hiſtorians every where diſcover a viſible and ſtrong Prejudice and Prepoſſeſſion in Favour of their Nation, whom they continually repreſent as God's peculiar and moſt beloved People, his Choſen, his Inheritance, Portion, and Delight. But that theſe high Pretenſions were all owing to their Pride, Vanity, and Superſtition, is ſufficiently prov'd from their own Hiſtory which they give us themſelves.

When they undertook the Conqueſt of *Canaan*, they pretended a Commiſſion from God to put all the Inhabitants, Men, Women, and Children, to the Sword, and poſſeſs themſelves of the whole Country; and this they ſaid God had promiſed and ſecured to them 400 Years before, in the Days of *Abraham*, and that this was the exact Time of its Accompliſhment: But this ſoon appeared to have been a Forgery, and falſe in Fact; for had God ever engaged himſelf to any ſuch thing, as to give them the quiet, peaceable Poſſeſſion of the whole Land, at the End of 400 Years, no doubt but he would have made it good, and enabled them to put their divine Commiſſion in Execution, which

which he did not do. They poſſeſs'd themſelves indeed of a great many Cities and Towns upon the Mountains, and put all to the Sword ſo far as they prevail'd; but they could not drive them out of the Vallies, becauſe they had Chariots of Iron, that is, they were furniſhed with Horſe, which the *Iſraelite* Infantry, notwithſtanding their divine Commiſſion, could not ſtand before. This Conqueſt, ſo far as they carried it over the mountainous Parts of the Country, was the moſt bloody, cruel, and outragious, that ever had been known, and beyond all Example till this Time. Had it been an armed Enemy in the Field, and in a prior State of War with them, they muſt have had a Right, by the Law of Nature and Nations, to Mercy and Quarter upon their Submiſſion. But to put Women and Children to the Sword, without any Provocation, who had never injured them, and who were quietly and peaceably enjoying their own, in order to enter upon their Poſſeſſions and Properties, and to plead a divine Commiſſion and Authority from God for all this, ſeems to be the higheſt Complication of Outrage, bloody Cruelty, Superſtition, and Profanation of the holy Name and awful Authority of God, that human Nature is capable of. I am ſure they who believe theſe things to have been done by an immediate Commiſſion and Authority from God, ought to have nothing leſs than Demonſtration for it, and not truſt to the diſtant Reports of the moſt prejudiced and ſuperſtitious Hiſtorians, ſuch as

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theſe *Hebrew* Writers plainly appear to be. It is true indeed, that by ſuppoſing a Revelation above Reaſon, and contrary to Humanity, a Man may juſtify this Conduct of the *Iſraelites*, or any other Wickedneſs in the World: But if ſuch Commiſſion and divine Authority ſhould not be granted; I doubt our Author would never be able to prove it.

This Author grounds the whole of *Revealed Religion* upon the Evidence of Miracles, as a Proof of divine Authority, abſtracted from, or independent of any Reaſon or Fitneſs of Things; as appearing to the Underſtanding by a rational Connexion of Ideas. This is plainly the Author's grand Principle, and what he has made himſelf accountable for; or otherwiſe he would not contradict me. But before I come directly to the Buſineſs of Miracles, I ſhall here take leave to make a few general Obſervations, which I intend not as mere *Poſtulata* or Things granted, but as ſo many previous *Lemmata* to be afterwards farther applied.

1. Then; We have no certain Teſt or Rule of Judgment, whereby to diſtinguiſh between a true Miracle and a falſe, or between a Thing of this Nature that is really done, or done only in Appearance. The Senſes themſelves are liable to Deception, and in Caſes of this Kind we have the more Reaſon to ſuſpect them; and therefore ought to be the more upon our Guard againſt being deceived and impoſed on. The innumerable Stories of ſupernatural Facts which have been generally received and believed, as ſtrongly

ſtrongly atteſted by great Numbers of credible Eye and Ear-witneſſes, and yet afterwards appeared ill grounded, and to have been owing to Impoſture, Ignorance, or Credulity, is a ſufficient Ground for Caution and Suſpenſe about ſuch Matters. And Men are the more eaſily impoſed on in ſuch Matters, as they love to gratify the Paſſion of *Admiration*, and take a great deal of Pleaſure in hearing or telling of Wonders. But,

2. We have no Teſt or Rule of human Judgment whereby to know what is or is not a Miracle, ſuppoſing the Thing to be really done, and that there is no Deception in the Caſe with regard to the Fact itſelf. Becauſe we know not the utmoſt Power of natural Agents, or how far even the moſt common Cauſes may ſometimes concur unobſerved by us, which may make a Thing look extraordinary when there is nothing uncommon in it. And from hence, how extraordinary and ſupernatural ſoever a Thing may appear, and tho' the Fact be certainly true and obvious to the Senſe, yet we can ſcarce ever pronounce with any Certainty, concerning a peculiar divine Agency, or immediate and occaſional divine Interpoſition.

3. Where the Facts are not the immediate Objects of Senſe, but depend upon Teſtimony, this Teſtimony, being human, muſt be always fallible. And in this Caſe the Probability will be ſtill leſs at a greater Diſtance from the Fountain, or firſt original Evidences; or as it comes through more Hands, and in a longer Succeſſion

of

of Time. For in this Caſe there muſt be always ſome Danger of Alterations in the Conveyance, and a few Circumſtances in a Story either left out or added, might make the moſt common Thing in the World look extraordinary and miraculous.

4. As human Teſtimony muſt be always fallible, ſo with regard to Miracles, Prodigies, Ghoſts, Apparitions, and Things in themſelves improbable, it has the very leaſt and loweſt Degree of *Credibility*. The ſame Teſtimony and Atteſtation which would be eaſily taken for a common natural Fact, would not be ſoon admitted for an extraordinary and miraculous one, where there muſt be always more Danger and Probability of Deception. And therefore the Evidence or Proof in this Caſe ought to be ſo much the ſtronger and unconteſtable, in Proportion to the natural Improbability or Incredibility of the Thing. Every the leaſt Circumſtance or Poſſibility of Error or Deception in ſuch a Caſe ought to be narrowly ſifted, and ſtrictly examined; as Men would do in a like Caſe, if any great temporal Intereſt depended on it. Such Sort of Facts therefore have the loweſt Degree of Probability, next to thoſe which are abſolutely incredible and uncapable of Proof upon any Teſtimony at all, as being falſe and contradictory in their own Nature.

5. It is highly improbable, and cannot be admitted, that God ſhould work Miracles, or interpoſe by an immediate divine Power, out of the Way of natural Agency and common Providence,

vidence, but to anſwer ſome great End of vaſt Importance to Mankind. And therefore he would not work Miracles either to prove Things which were plainly and neceſſarily true in Nature and Reaſon before, nor Things in their own Nature indifferent, and ſuch as can ſerve to no good Uſe or Purpoſe at all, when they are known and put in Practice.

The great important End and Deſign of Chriſt's Miracles, was plainly to procure him a ſufficient Degree of Attention and Regard from the People, and to prove, from the beneficent Effects of them, that he was no Impoſtor or falſe Prophet, but a Favourite of God and a Friend to Mankind. And had not this been proved, they would never have hearkened to him at all, and he could never have taught or inſtructed them in the moſt plain and neceſſary Truths of Nature and Reaſon. But when he had thus procured a due Attention and Regard to his Doctrines, they carried their own Conviction with them, and by their native Light and Energy forced their own Way to the Hearts and Conſciences of Men. Suppoſe a Man ſhould deſign ſome great Good to another, who is ſo much prejudiced againſt him, that he will not attend to, or regard him, and cannot believe him to be his Friend: In this Caſe it is impoſſible the Perſon ſhould receive the Benefit intended him in a Way of rational Choice and Acceptance, without firſt conquering his Prejudice, and bringing him to a Temper and Diſpoſition to hear and hearken to his Friend.

This I take to be exactly a parallel Case. Jesus Christ appeared, and came into the World for the vast Advantage of Mankind. He was to bring them out of the Darkness of Idolatry, Superstition, and false Religion, into the clear Light of Reason and true Religion. Yet the People were not only blind and irrational, but desperately perverse and obstinate in their Superstition; and could not imagine that any new Prophet could teach them better than they had been taught before. They had heard of nothing but Miracles, and had been settled in nothing but what had been confirmed and proved by Miracles; and therefore it was absolutely necessary to work more and greater Miracles, and such as might have a more visible Tendency to the Good of Mankind than any that had been wrought before. And without this, it would have been impossible to have gained any Regard or Attention at all to the most obvious Truths from so stupid a Generation, who had never taken any divine Truth upon its proper genuine Evidence before. But then this Point being gained, and Attention procured, the Conviction came in another Way, and Religion was put upon a quite different Foundation. It was the native intrinsic Evidence of eternal immutable divine Truth, that convinced the Understandings, and made its own Way to the Hearts and Consciences of Men. And tho' the Miracles might be necessary to make Way for this and procure Attention, they could be no proper Evidence, or additional Proof of it.

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The great Queſtion then was, Whether Jeſus was a true Prophet, or an Impoſtor and Deceiver, or whether he wrought his Miracles by a divine or diabolical Power? And the Scribes, Phariſees, and unbelieving *Jews* aſſerted the latter. But how was this anſwered and retorted? Was it by maintaining that none but a true Prophet could work Miracles, or exert any ſuch Power? Not at all, but the quite contrary. *If I by Belzebub caſt out Devils, by whom do your own Sons caſt them out? therefore they ſhall be your Judges.* This was an Argument *ad hominem.* They could not ſay that their *own Sons*, or their own Party, caſt out Devils by a diabolical Power, or by a Confederacy with the Devil. And yet it ſeems they did caſt them out, by ſome Means, and to ſome Ends and Purpoſes or other; which was doubtleſs to ſupport their own Superſtition, or to maintain their uſurped Dominion over the Underſtandings and Conſciences of Men, by the ſpecious and plauſible Pretence of Miracles, as a Proof of divine Authority. But our Saviour lays the great Streſs of the Argument, not upon the extraordinary Nature of the Power exerted or Things done, but upon the Ends and Purpoſes for which ſuch Power is employed, and to which it is directed. And he inſiſts upon it that his Miracles were all exerted for the Good of Mankind, not only for their outward temporal Good, but to enlighten their Underſtandings, bring them to the true Knowledge of God and themſelves, and to promote Truth, Peace, and Righteouſ-

neſs in the World. And this not upon the Foot of mere Authority and blind Submiſſion, but upon the Principles of eternal immutable Truth and Reaſon. If we leave this out, the Nature and Reaſon of Things, as appearing to the Underſtanding in a *rational Connexion of Ideas*, the Plea of the Scribes and Phariſees, as to any Argument from Miracles, muſt have been as good as Chriſt's own Plea, and have gone as far.

But farther, that wicked Men may work Miracles, and even ſuch as in their outward temporal Effects are for the Good of Mankind, is very plain from what Chriſt himſelf aſſures us, that in the laſt Day many ſuch ſhall come and plead with him, that *in his Name they have preached and propheſied, caſt out Devils, and done many wonderful Works*; whom yet he will reject and diſown as *Workers of Iniquity*. And from hence it is evident, that neither the Power of working Miracles, nor the external temporal Effects of it for the Good of others, can ſo much as prove a good Man, and much leſs a true Prophet, without the *moral Character*, conſiſtent throughout in a regular uniform Life and Converſation, exemplifying and recommending real Virtue and true Goodneſs. But this would be appealing to human Obſervation and Reaſon, and reſting the whole Argument upon a *rational Connexion of Ideas in the Underſtanding*, which the Patrons of Miracles, as the Proof of divine Authority, abſtracted from the Nature and Reaſon of Things, as appearing

ing to the Understanding, ought to take care of and avoid.

But it is farther evident, That neither the Power of working Miracles, nor the strongest Faith in it had any Connexion at all with that *Faith* which denominated Men *faithful*, and recommended them to the Favour of God. Multitudes who believed in Christ as a true Prophet, and who received the Benefit of their *Faith of Healing*, as to the Cure of their Diseases, were yet most faithless wicked Wretches, and knew nothing of that Faith and Righteousness by which they must be saved. There were vast Numbers that followed Christ only for the Loaves and Fishes, or from the Hopes of some bodily Cures, whose Faith only wrought by the Force and Power of Imagination, and must have had the same Effects, whether it had been well or ill grounded. This Faith or Healing was indispensably necessary, and nothing else was necessary to the Cure, whether the Person healed was morally a good or a bad Man. *Dost thou believe? If thou believest thou mayest be healed, thy Faith hath made thee whole, and be it unto thee according to thy Faith*, was the constant Language and indispensable Condition of those miraculous Cures. And yet when there were ten Lepers healed at once, there was but one who returned to give Glory to God. And this one was a *Stranger*; but the other nine were *true Jews*, their Turn had been served, and they cared for no more. This necessary prerequisite, Faith, was purely natural, and de-

pended on Mens different Tempers and Diſpoſitions, and could not be given or communicated; for otherwiſe it cannot be doubted, but ſo great and true a Lover of Mankind as Chriſt was, he would have given it to his own Brethren, and to his Neighbours the *Gallileans*, among whom he could work but few or no Miracles, *becauſe of their Unbelief*; but this great Prophet had no Honour in his own Country, neither did his own Brethren believe on him. One would think, had the Miracles been intended as a Teſt of Truth, or capable of producing any true ſaving Faith, that they ought to have been wrought chiefly upon Unbelievers, as the moſt effectual Means of their Conviction and Converſion; but it is plain that the Caſe was quite otherwiſe.

But after all, there was ſomething peculiar to the *Jews* in this magiſterial authoritative Way of teaching; they had no Notion of any eternal immutable Law of Nature, or Rule of Righteouſneſs, which muſt be always the Will and Law of God to Mankind. They had Underſtandings, but little ſuperior to the Beaſts; they were always groſsly ignorant, and ſuperſtitious People, and their Pride and Superſtition had ſeparated them from the reſt of the World; they knew nothing of human Nature, or of Mankind, and from hence *Moſes* and the Prophets were forced to deal with them as School-Boys, or Children in their Non-age, and under the firſt Rudiments of Inſtruction; they received even the Moral Law from *Moſes* as a Matter of

of particular positive Institution, and not as true or reasonable in itself; and as they received and submitted to it, only upon this Foot of blind Obedience to Authority, and slavish Fear of Punishment, they were as much disposed upon the same Principle to receive *Falsehood* as *Truth*, or to do *Evil* as *Good*; for they were to receive and submit to every Thing, whether in Doctrine or Practice, upon the same Foot of *Authority*, supported by *Miracles*, of which *Miracles*, they themselves were to be the only Judges; though they were under a natural Incapacity of judging right about it; every Thing was a Miracle with such a stupid People, that they did not understand, or could not account for, and that was really nothing at all. And from hence we see, That they went out of *Egypt* through the *Red-Sea*, received a Law at Mount *Sinai* which they never obeyed, travelled up and down in the Wilderness forty Years, without any human Means of Subsistence, and without ever wearing out or changing their Clothes from Infants to grown Men and Women; then at last they conquered Part of the Land of *Canaan*, by murdering the Inhabitants and lawful Possessors, and lived together after this for many hundred Years, continually drenched with Blood, either by their Wars with the Nations round about them, or by intestine Broils and Divisions among themselves; in which they cut the Throats, and ript up the Bowels of one another from Time to Time, and were at last utterly destroyed and rooted

out as a Nation or Body-Politick, and made a By-word, Scorn, and Reproach, to all Nations, without the leaſt Hope or Expectation of a Reſtoration, from any Reaſon or human Appearance of Probability after a Deſertion and total Diſperſion of above ſixteen hundred Years; and all this in a miraculous Way, and as a Proof of divine Authority, and God's ſpecial Favour to his choſen People. But by all this, I think, God has ſufficiently ſhewn in the Courſe of his Providence, the Nature and Conſequences of *Enthuſiaſm*, and how far the Pretence of *Miracles* to ſupport a *divine Authority*, that muſt not be farther reaſoned upon by any prior Principles, can be a proper Foundation for *true Religion*. Sure I am, that ſuch a Principle may ſerve to ſupport any Scheme of Impoſture, Superſtition, and falſe Religion, but can be of no Service at all to Truth of any Sort.

It is true that *Chriſt* himſelf, whoſe Miniſtry was confined entirely to the Jews, applies to them pretty much in this Way of Authority, as they were capable of being taught and inſtructed in no other way, and in this Method of teaching like Children and Minors, *Moſes* and the Prophets had always trained them up. They would never receive any Truth or Duty from the cleareſt Reaſon and Fitneſs of Things, till God himſelf had pronounced it from the Mouth of a Prophet. No doubt but the Unity of God is as clearly and demonſtrably founded in the Nature and Reaſon of Things, as any thing can be; and yet this ſtupid

People

People could never have believed it, if God himſelf had not declared it in a viſible, ſenſible Manner, that they might have his own Word for it. And tho' our Saviour was forced to take them in their own Way, yet his Doctrines were of ſuch a Nature, as to carry with them a Degree of Light, Evidence, and Conviction, vaſtly ſuperior to any ſenſible Manifeſtation of Authority whatever; and therefore when they came to feel the irreſiſtible Force and Energy of divine Truth upon their Underſtandings and Conſciences, they cry'd out, that this Man taught them like *one in Authority*, and not like the Scribes and Phariſees. He taught them not as a Ruler, or Man in Power that could puniſh their Diſobedience in a legal Way, as their other Doctors did, but with the Authority of a Prophet, or Teacher ſent from God, by the clear irreſiſtible Evidence and Conviction of Truth. And this was certainly a *divine* Method of teaching, and the only Way to enlighten the Underſtanding, and purify the Heart and Affections, by bringing Men to the right Uſe of Reaſon, and applying Truth to their Conſciences; which no legal Exerciſe of Authority, or any mere external viſible Manifeſtations of Power, could have done. This latter had been the Method by which this blind, obſtinate, and incorrigible Generation had been always governed; they had been kept under the Terror and Laſh of penal Laws, and often frighted with the prophetic Denunciations of terrible temporal Vengeance, and Judgments from

from God. But their Underſtandings had never been truly enlightened, nor their Hearts and Affections ever been apply'd to by the Light and Conviction of Truth in a right Way; and accordingly ſuch a Diſpenſation had a ſuitable Effect upon them, and ſuch as muſt naturally be expected; their Obedience was only the Submiſſion of Slaves, their Virtue nothing but a Reſtraint upon outward Actions, and their Repentance like that of a Thief or Murderer at the Gallows. But the Chriſtian Diſpenſation is of another and higher Kind; it conſiſts not in the Exerciſe of coërcive Authority, nor in any external viſible and ſenſible Manifeſtation of *mere Power*, but in the internal Manifeſtation of *Truth* to the *Underſtanding*; in *clear Light*, *free Choice*, and *rational Obedience*.

And accordingly when St *Paul* comes to preach the Goſpel to the Gentiles, we hear but very little of any Miracles wrought among them; he had a Goſpel to preach, and Doctrines to be delivered to them, that muſt make their own Way, and force Conviction as ſoon as they came to be duly conſidered. He does not Send them to *Moſes* and the Prophets for Conviction, or come to them with a Hear, O ye Rebels! Thus ſaith the Lord; or, this is the poſitive expreſs Voice of God himſelf to you; but he appeals to the Law written in their Hearts, and with clear and ſolid Reaſon urges them with the native Force and Energy of *Moral Truth*. Had this Apoſtle thought the *Jewiſh* Law and Oeconomy to have any neceſſary or uſeful

uſeful Connexion with Chriſtianity, he muſt have firſt inſtructed the *Gentiles* in it before he could have made them Chriſtians; but he was ſo far from this, that he never once mentions *Moſes* and the Prophets, or draws any Conſequences from them, but to the *Jews* themſelves, who could admit of no other Authority; and where this Apoſtle meets with any of the *Jewiſh* Faction among the *Gentiles*, who would have placed Chriſtianity upon the Foot of *Moſes* and the Prophets, he makes it his chief Buſineſs to bring the *Gentiles* off from it, as a Conſtitution and State of Thing, which never had, nor ever could anſwer the Ends and Purpoſes of *true Religion*. And it is very plain, that this Attempt to connect Chriſtianity with Judaiſm, proved the greateſt Obſtacle to the Propagation of St *Paul*'s Goſpel, or true Chriſtianity, among the *Gentiles*; and the Patrons of it, the judaizing Preachers and Teachers were the Apoſtle's bittereſt Enemies, and the Authors of all his Troubles.

I have here premiſed thus much to ſhorten the Work, and to ſave the Reader's Time and Patience, ſince I ſhall have little elſe to do, but to apply theſe preliminary Propoſitions and Principles to the Author's particular Exceptions and Evaſions, as I go along with him, and attend him from one Thing to another; for I cannot ſee that he has offered any Thing new, or done any Thing but declaim upon the common Topics and ſyſtematical Hypotheſes of *School-Divinity*; which is no extraordinary Thing,

Thing, and nothing but what any other *Preacher* might have done as well as he.

This Author's whole Book, as to the argumentative Part of it, may be reduced to this one Syllogiſm, *Whatever God has commanded muſt be reaſonable and fit, and ought conſequently to be done, on the ſole Foot of his Authority, abſtracted from any prior Reaſon, or Fitneſs of Things, as appearing to the Underſtanding:*

But God has commanded ſome Things purely indifferent in their own Nature, ſo far as we can ſee, and other Things which muſt appear unreaſonable to our weak Underſtandings, abſtracted from ſuch immediate divine Authority:

Therefore Things indifferent in themſelves, or which might otherwiſe appear unreaſonable and unfit to mere human Reaſon, may be reaſonable, fit and neceſſary by divine Authority.

Now I have denied the minor Propoſition in this Argument, excepting in the Caſe of *immediate perſonal Inſpiration*, which this Author thinks to be denying *all Revelation* or *Truth from God.* The Queſtion here is not whether God may not reveal or diſcover Truth to the Mind in a Way ſuperior to what is common and natural, for this I have granted: Nor is the Queſtion, whether all Truth is not from God, as the only true original Fountain and Conveyer of it; for this the Author has never denied, and I ſuppoſe never will. Nor, *laſtly*, is the Queſtion, Whether God may not communicate and convey *ſpiritual* and *divine Truth*, or Truth relating to the Will of God, concern-

ing

ing our Duty and Happineſs to the Underſtanding of Men, either mediately or immediately, as he thinks fit: He may give ſpiritual Knowledge, Wiſdom, and Underſtanding, to ſome Men in a Degree vaſtly ſuperior to others, by the ſuperior Strength and Extent of their own natural Faculties, or by occaſional Illuminations as he may think fit. Nothing of this, I preſume, can be any Part of the Controverſy between the Author and me; but the only Queſtion is concerning the principal Characteriſtic, or Medium of Proof, by which we are to perceive and judge of *divine Truth*, or of Truth *as coming from God*. And here the Author ſeems to think, that human Teſtimony and Authority, weak and fallible as it is, is yet both ſufficient, and the only Means of conveying ſuch Truth to us, who cannot pretend to any immediate perſonal Inſpiration, or Revelation, in the Caſe. But it is certain, that *divine* AUTHORITY, as founded upon *human Authority*, muſt be liable to all the Weakneſs, Uncertainty, Failures, and Imperfections of ſuch *human Authority*. Since the Superſtructure can never be ſtronger than the Foundation, nor the Concluſion clearer than the Principles from which it is drawn; and therefore I ſhould not care to truſt my Soul with a Man who would place *Religion*, and *eternal Salvation*, upon ſuch a Bottom. And if the Author is not here diſputing about Religion, as the neceſſary Means of *Salvation*, he can be only acting

acting the Part of a *weak Enthuſiaſt*, or *artful Impoſtor*.

According to him, *Truth*, tho' ever ſo clearly and demonſtrably connected with our *Duty* and *Happineſs*, cannot be *divine Truth*, or a Revelation from God, unleſs it comes in the Way of *poſitive Authority*, abſtracted from the Reaſon or Fitneſs of Things, and confirmed by *Miracles*. I take this to be the Controverſy between us; but I ſhall give it in his own Words, from *Page* 15, where he ſtates the Queſtion, and opens the Debate as follows.

" This leads me to the ſecond Queſtion " that was propoſed to be conſidered; with " regard to which I lay down this Propoſi- " tion: That there may be ſuch Proofs and " Evidences given, that the Perſons profeſſing " to have received Doctrines and Laws from " God for the Uſe of Mankind, were indeed " ſent and inſpired by him, and did receive " them by Revelation from him: Such Proofs " and Evidences as make it reaſonable for thoſe " to whom they are made known, to receive " ſuch Laws and Doctrines as of divine Autho- " rity; in which Caſe, to refuſe to receive " thoſe Doctrines, and to ſubmit to thoſe Laws, " would be a very criminal Conduct, and a " manifeſt Breach of the Duty which ſuch " reaſonable Creatures owe to the Supreme " Being. This is the proper Queſtion in De- " bate. For tho' this Writer pretends not to " deny, that the Perſons to whom the original " Revelation

" Revelation is immediately made, may be " certain, that they themſelves received it by " immediate Revelation from God himſelf; " yet he denies that they have any Way of " proving to others that it is a Revelation from " God, except by proving the Reaſonableneſs of " the thing itſelf; which is to ſay, that they " have no Way of proving to others, that it " came by divine Revelation at all: For as I " have already obſerved, the Reaſonableneſs of " a Doctrine or Law will never alone prove, " that the Man who teacheth that Doctrine, " or bringeth that Law, had it by *immediate* " *Revelation* from God. This muſt be prov'd, " if it be prov'd at all by other Evidence. It " will be eaſily granted, that Perſons being " perſwaded that they have received any thing " from God by *immediate Revelation*, is not in " itſelf a ſufficient Reaſon to others, to engage " them to receive it as ſuch; and if we had " only their own Word for it, without any o- " ther Proof, we could not take this for a pro- " per Evidence, without laying ourſelves open " to the Deluſions of Enthuſiaſm and Impo- " ſture. The Queſtion then is, Whether, ab- " ſtracting from the Credit and Teſtimony of " the Perſons themſelves to whom the original " Revelation is made, there may not be Proofs " and Evidences given, ſufficient to convince " others, that they were indeed ſent of God; " and that what they publiſh from God, and in " his Name, is indeed a Revelation from him."

I cannot

I cannot ſay but the Author has here ſtated the Queſtion fairly enough; for what he undertakes to prove, as every one muſt ſee, is, the Truth and Certainty of a *divine Revelation* upon the Evidence of *Miracles*, abſtracted from the Nature, Reaſon, or Fitneſs, of Things; and if he could get rid of this Buſineſs, as eaſily as he has undertaken it, he would be indeed a great Man. But this is the Point to be debated, and in which I ſhall give him fair Play without Favour.

In the firſt Place then, it may be obſerved, that this Gentleman builds his whole Proof upon a *Petitio Principii*. He every where takes the miraculous Facts, with regard to *Moſes* as well as *Chriſt*, as granted, or indiſputably prov'd, when yet he could not but know the contrary. But if you ſhould pretend to deny, or even to doubt of, any of the Facts, tho' it ſhould be the moſt ſuſpicious and obnoxious of them, which the *Hebrew* Hiſtorians have recorded of *Moſes*, this Author would immediately cry out Murder, and call you *Atheiſt*, *Deiſt*, *Free-thinker*, *Infidel*, or any thing that is worſe than a *Turk* or a *Jew*; ſo dangerous is it to provoke Men of his *Authority*. But to oblige him, and give him all poſſible Advantage in the Argument, I ſhall ſuppoſe with him the certain indubitable Truth of the Facts themſelves, and yet muſt deny the Uſe he has made of it, and all the Conſequences he has drawn from it, as utterly precarious, unnaturally ſtrained, and forced into his Service, without Reaſon or Conſent.

Conſent. As he has ſet aſide all Conſiderations drawn from the Nature, Reaſon, and Fitneſs, of Things, as appearing to the Underſtanding, he can have no farther or higher Medium of Proof for any thing, as true, rational, or divine: For how would he prove, that Chriſt himſelf and the Apoſtles were not Impoſtors, but from the intrinſick Excellency of their Doctrines, as recommending themſelves to the Reaſon and Conſciences of Men, and from their great Uſefulneſs and Advantage to Mankind, as moſt agreeable to the Natural and Moral Neceſſities of Man, and the Natural and Moral Perfections of God?

Nothing, I think, can be plainer than this, that the bare Exertion of Power, of what Nature or Kind ſoever, can have no Connexion with Truth or Goodneſs; but the Ends and Purpoſes to which that Power is employed and directed, whether ordinary or extraordinary, natural or ſupernatural, muſt denominate the Perſon as good or bad, a Friend or Enemy to Mankind, as the Tree is known by its Fruits. And any other Rule of Judgment concerning the Exerciſe of Power, whether natural or ſupernatural, we have not, and cannot have.

This learned Author ought to have given us ſome certain Notion or Idea, or other, of a Miracle, at leaſt as the Matter ſtands in his Apprehenſions. If that muſt be a Miracle which rarely happens, and for which we can aſſign no natural common Cauſe, that will be a Miracle to one Man that is not ſo to another;

and in this Way the more a Man knows of natural Cauſes, and of Circumſtances and Incidents in which they muſt operate in an unuſual Manner, the fewer Miracles he will believe, and the leſs Weight any ſuch Evidence will have with him. But if Things of this Nature are then only *Miracles*, when they are wrought for the Confirmation of *Truth*, and to diſcountenance and ſet aſide *Impoſture* and *Error*, we muſt have ſome Notion of *Truth* antecedent to the Miracle, and by which we are to judge of the Miracle itſelf, and not of Truth by the Miracle, as this Author ſuppoſes. If we would ſay, that thoſe are true Miracles, and are done by a divine Power, which are wrought for the Confirmation of Truth; and falſe Miracles, or diabolical Deluſions, which are done to ſupport Superſtition and Error, this might be right enough; but then the Author's Order muſt be inverted, and we muſt judge of Miracles by Truth, and not of Truth by Miracles. And tho' this is doubtleſs the beſt and moſt natural Way of judging, yet it will not ſerve any Scheme, or Syſtem of *Superſtition* or *Impoſture*.

This Author can *eaſily grant, that Mens Words are not to be taken as to any internal immediate Revelation to themſelves, of which they may be certain; and why then is their* Word to be taken for Miracles, or the external ſupernatural Cauſes of things, in which they are more liable to be miſtaken? He ſeems to ſee the Abſurdity of placing Truth upon human fallible Authority; and

and yet his Scheme neceſſarily leads him to place the moſt *important* or *divine Truth* upon this very ſame Foot of human fallible Authority. But ſurely he ought to be more conſiſtent with himſelf. Had this Author been a fair Reaſoner, and aimed at nothing but *Truth*, he would have undertaken the direct Proof of his main Principle which he every where tacitly ſuppoſes, namely, the Infallibility of the Biblical Hiſtorians as prov'd by the Miracles, or that they could not err in any thing they delivered. But he knew very well, that the Miracles could not prove this, and yet was not likely to own it without unmaſking himſelf, and letting the Reader into the whole Myſtery of the Argument, in which he is ſo good a *Maſter of Arts*. For this Author never urges any Argument, but by ſuppoſing the Truth of the Fact, and ſuppoſing the Infallibility of the Hiſtorians conſidered as ſuch; that is, by ſuppoſing every thing which he ought to have proved and could not prove. And this Way of ſuppoſing is the Scholaſtic Method of Demonſtration, in the Art of *School-Divinity*.

But this Author's whole Diſcoure upon Miracles in his firſt Chapter, is entirely oratorial and declamatory, without any thing of Argument in it. He ſuppoſes the Miracles wrought by *Chriſt* and the Apoſtles, to be intended as the proper Proof and Evidence of the Doctrines. He rejects the internal rational Evidence of the Doctrines to the Underſtanding, and places the Proof of *Chriſtianity* as a *Revelation* from God, upon

bare external, visible Acts of Power, which in their own Nature have no Connexion with Truth or Righteousness. But as I have sufficiently confuted this weak *systematical* Ground of Truth, and shewn it to be the true and natural Foundation of all Superstition and Imposture; I may now trust the Reader with the Author's Harangues upon it, without following him any farther in such a *Wild-Goose Chace.*

SECT.

SECT. II.

Natural and Reveal'd Religion not essentially different, but in regard to their Subject-Matter one and the same. Covenant of Peculiarity with the Jews, a vain Pretence and national Delusion. The Abrahamic Covenant of Righteousness not confin'd to that Nation, but extending to all Mankind. Mosaic Reformation from Idolatry very imperfect. The People worshipped God under false Notions and Images of a local, oracular, and tutelar Deity. Miracles of Moses *no Proof of his divine Mission; they relate to no Attribute of God but Power, and carry with them plain Marks of Imposture.*

THE Author in his second Chapter, enters upon an Answer to what had been urged against the Law of *Moses* as a *divine Institution*, or *immediate Revelation* from God; and here he premises several things concerning the intrinsic Goodness, natural Evidence, Wisdom, and rational Design of that Law, with regard to the *Moral Polity* of it, and with respect to the ritual or ceremonial Part of the Polity; he doubts not but if the Reason and Fitness of things, as arising from the particular Temper, Disposition, and other Circumstances of the People at that Time could be now known,

the ceremonial Part would appear as wise and reasonable as the moral Part of that Law. But this, with Submission, is entirely overthrowing and giving up the Argument of the last Chapter; for there, divine Authority, as proved by Miracles, was the only proper and genuine Evidence of divine Truth, or a Revelation from God. The prior rational Evidence to the Understanding, may make a thing reasonable and fit in itself, and consequently a Part of the Law of Nature and Reason. Some external, visible and extraordinary Acts of Power, supposed to be from God, is the only genuine Proof of a Revelation from God; and this being supposed, such Truth ought to be receiv'd and obey'd, whether it should appear rational and fit by any prior Evidence to the Understanding or not; nay should it appear ever so unreasonable or unfit to our weak Reason and Understandings, it must yet be received and submitted to upon the Foot of *divine Authority*. This Principle, tho' the Author seems willing to get rid of it; if he could do it fairly, he must be soon forced to take up with again, if he would vindicate the divine Authority of *Moses* in his own Way of immediate Revelation.

In the Way of *Spiritual Scholasticism*, or *School-Divinity*, there must be two absolutely, distinct, and essentially different *Religions*, or Rules and Principles of Judgment about *Religion*, one of which they would call *Natural* and the other *Reveal'd* Religion. This might look

look like ſetting up *Imperium in Imperio*, or two different and independent Judicatures in the ſame Society, which the Politicians have generally thought impoſſible and impracticable. But our *School-Divines* will undoubtedly take off this Difficulty, and ſet the whole Matter in a clear Light by a little longer Patience and Attention. But in the mean while, I can only give my own Opinion, as thus: The true Eternal and Immutable Religion of God and Nature, conſiſts *in the filial Love and Fear of God, and the brotherly Love of Mankind, in the Practice of all thoſe moral Duties of Truth and Righteouſneſs which reſult from it, under a fiducial Truſt in, and Dependence on, God, and the conſtant Senſe of his Power and Preſence, in all our Actions, as the Rewarder of good and Puniſher of bad Men.* This is the Religion founded in *Nature* and *Reaſon*, and which muſt be at all Times and every where the ſame. And ſome have thought, that as this Reaſon in Matters of Religion had been in a great meaſure loſt and neglected, amidſt the general Ignorance, Superſtition, and Idolatry, of Mankind; it was the great Buſineſs and Deſign of Revelation to reſtore it, and to ſet Moral Truth and Reaſon in its true original Light, by bringing Men to the right Uſe of their Reaſon and Underſtandings in ſuch Matters. This is my Way of thinking about it; but others, and particularly our Author, ſeem to think in a quite contrary Way: They take *Reveal'd Religion* not to be *Natural Religion* revived, but a perfectly different Re-

ligion, depending upon very different Principles and Grounds of Proof; and Reveal'd Religion with them, is a new Set of Doctrines abſolutely above and beyond the Inveſtigation and Judgment of human Reaſon, and depending on certain external, viſible, and extraordinary Facts, as Proofs and Manifeſtations of the Will of God above Reaſon. What theſe ſupernatural Doctrines are, or how this ſupernatural, external, and viſible Proof, as ſuperior to Reaſon, may be known and judged of, is a Matter not yet agreed upon, and I doubt never will. But this I take to be the Controverſy between the learned Author and me, the Diſpute is about rational and ſenſible *Religion*, or whether *Senſe* or *Reaſon* are moſt to be regarded and depended on in Matters of Religion; and as the ingenious Author has very openly and honourably brought this to a fair Trial, I hope the Reader will have Patience enough to hear it out.

Our Author lays a very great Streſs upon a popular Notion, which had generally prevail'd among the Jews, and in which their Prophets and Hiſtorians had greatly contributed to ſupport, humour, and encourage, the Pride, Vanity, and Superſtition, of the common People; namely, that this Nation, excluſive of any other, had been choſen, ſeparated, and ſet apart, as God's peculiar People, to be intitled to ſpecial Favour and paternal Affection, not only in the Courſe of common Providence, but by the moſt extraordinary occaſional Interpoſi-

tions,

ſitions. The Prophets, indeed, might have good Reaſon to be under a plain Neceſſity for this, conſidering the Blindneſs and Obduracy of the People they had to deal with; who, being incapable of any thing rational, and abſtract, as true and neceſſary in the Nature of Things themſelves, could be governed and influenced only by working upon their groſs carnal Imaginations, by things not only external and ſenſible, but extraordinary and ſupernatural too. And though ſome *Enthuſiaſts* may call this *Impoſture*, yet where it was neceſſary for the good of a Nation, it muſt have been juſtifiable; and it might eaſily be proved, that all the civilized Nations in the World, were at firſt brought under Government, and Diſcipline, and Regulation of Laws in the ſame Way. And indeed this People from firſt to laſt, could ſcarce ever be ſaid to be civilized at all; but notwithſtanding the Goodneſs of their Moral Polity, were always a wild, fierce, ungovernable Mob. They might be well called a brutiſh Generation, and a People of no Underſtanding; for with regard to any thing true and right in the Nature and Reaſon of Things, they had little more Knowledge than their Sheep and Cattle. Amidſt all their Idolatry and moral Wickedneſs, in which they might have vied with any Nation upon Earth, they could never be perſuaded that God would ever caſt off his choſen People, or break his everlaſting Covenant and Promiſes with them, made to *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*. No, ſurely; he could never forſake his *Firſt-*

born,

born, his only *Son Iſrael*, his *Darling* and *Delight!*

But how does it appear that this People were ever ſuch peculiar Covenant-Servants to the Almighty, or that they were ever under any ſuch ſpecial Relation of Adoption, or Sonſhip, as they pretended to? I am ſure, this cannot appear from any Part of their natural Hiſtory, or State of the Nation from firſt to laſt, as their own Hiſtorians have given it in, and handed down to us. How then ſhall we know it, or by what Rule muſt we judge? Muſt we take their own Word, or the proud ſuperſtitious Imaginations of their own People for it? Or, will this learned Author undertake to prove, that there was nothing of Pride and Superſtition on the one Hand, or of Art and human Policy on the other? I ſhall make it plain, that he has proved nothing of this, and has ſaid nothing to it, but what is merely preſumptive, declamatory, and evaſive.

But farther, as to the *Covenant of Peculiarity*, in which the *Jewiſh* Nation prided themſelves, and which this Author has taken up with from them without proof, St *Paul* in a manner demonſtratively ſets it aſide, and proves by clear and ſolid Arguments, ſuch as might have convinced any Man but a *Jew*, that the *Covenant of Promiſe*, which God made with *Abraham*, had no peculiar Relation to *Abraham*'s *natural Seed*, or to the *Jewiſh Nation*, but extended equally to all Mankind, or to all the ſincere Worſhippers of the one *true God*

God, in all Nations, and at all Times, to the End of the World. Had the Author conſidered this, he need not have given himſelf ſo much Trouble to aſſign the Reaſons for a Thing not true in Fact. This puts me in mind of a Story which I have ſomewhere read of, a Queſtion which King *Charles* the Second put to ſome Members of the Royal Society, ſoon after he had founded and eſtabliſhed that learned Body. The Queſtion was this, How it ſhould come about, that any Quantity of Fiſh weighed in Water, and ſwimming in it, ſhould weigh nothing at all, or no more than the Water it ſelf would weigh without the Fiſh? This ſeemed a great Difficulty, and ſeveral learned Solutions were thought of, and given in to it, which only ſerved to create Diverſion; till at length one of them, wiſer than the reſt, propoſed that the Matter might be put to a Trial, whether it was true in Fact or no, and upon Trial it was found not to be true in Fact, and the Fiſh weighed juſt as much in the Water as out of it.

But the Author I preſume ſaw, that the *Covenant of Promiſe*, which God had made with *Abraham*, and in him with all the *Faithful*, and all true Worſhippers, would not do as to any *national Peculiarity*; and therefore he choſe to reſt this upon the *Law of Moſes*. But the Apoſtle had diſtinguiſhed between the *Covenant* or the *Promiſe*, or *Covenant of Promiſe*, and the Law; and proved that the *Covenant of Promiſe* which had been made four hundred

dred and thirty Years before, could have no Relation to, or Connexion with, the Law, as reſpecting a *particular Nation*. And this was very ſtrong and unanſwerable Reaſoning againſt a People, who imagined themſelves a peculiar *elect Nation*, upon the Principle of a *legal political Oeconomy*. It is plain, that the Law of *Moſes*, taking in the whole of it, was not a juſtifying Scheme, and yet this was certainly the Religion of that Nation, and they never knew or pretended to any other; and therefore St *Paul* brings them back to the *Abrahamic Covenant*, as containing the only true juſtifying Faith and Righteouſneſs, by which all Nations, and every Man, muſt be accepted and rewarded of God.

What this Author offers from his Syſtem and Common-Place-Book, concerning the vaſt Advantages of that Law and Oeconomy to other Nations, and keeping up the Knowledge and Worſhip of the one God in the World, is all mere Imagination; for it is certain, that no other Nation ever received the Worſhip of one God from this Nation; but they themſelves were continually running into Idolatry, and worſhipping from Time to Time the Gods of the ſeveral Nations that conquered them: And when Chriſtianity came to be preached, Judaiſm proved the greateſt Obſtacle to it. The zealous Sticklers for this Law, were the Men who every where raiſed Diſturbances and Perſecutions againſt St *Paul* in his preaching the Goſpel among the Gentiles, and were the

true

true Authors of all his Troubles and Sufferings. And the Miracles of *Moſes*, as ſuppoſed to have proved his Religion to be the *true Religion*, prevented and obſtructed the Progreſs of Chriſtianity, more than the Heathen Idolatry did; but God had never left himſelf without a ſtanding and moſt glorious Witneſs, and Proof of his Being and Perfections to Mankind, infinitely ſuperior to the Evidence of all thoſe Miracles of *Moſes*, ſuppoſing them to have been really wrought; and that not only before thoſe purblind ſuperſtitious and egyptianiz'd People, but even the Sight of the whole World; which could only aſtoniſh and confound, but not poſſibly prove the Truth or Righteouſneſs of ſuch a Religion as that. The Moral Law could need no Proof from Miracles, as depending upon a much clearer and ſuperior Proof before, and the Ceremonial Law was incapable of any Proof at all, as having any Thing of Religion in it. There might be good *human Policy* enough in it, and at that Time, and under thoſe Circumſtances, to indulge ſo blind and ſtupid a People in ſuch Superſtitions, and outward myſtical Pageantry, as they had ſeen nothing elſe in *Egypt*, and could not be brought off from it all at once. But the making ſuch a Law irreverſible and perpetual, as the eternal unalterable Will and Law of God, when Circumſtances might ſo vaſtly alter, does not ſeem to have been good Policy, and no human Politician ſince has thought ſo.

The

The Laws of the *Medes* and *Perſians* indeed are ſaid to have been unalterable, a Decree once made could not be revoked; but then it might be ſuperſeded and ſet aſide by a quite contrary Decree, which amounted to the ſame thing.

But after all, *Moſes* does not ſeem to have quite cured this People of Idolatry, even ſuppoſing that they had kept his Law; for though he confined all Worſhip and Obedience to one true God, yet he indulged the groſs Vulgar, or Body of the People, in a Sort of Worſhip, not much unlike to that of the Heathen local and tutelar Gods. No doubt but *Moſes* himſelf, and the Prophets after him, had juſt Notions enough of God, and of his ſpiritual divine Perfections; but with the groſs of the People, the God of *Iſrael* was a local tutelar God. He always reſided with the Ark, he ſat upon the Mercy-Seat between the Cherubims, with a luminous Glory about him, to be ready on all Occaſions to be conſulted by the People, and to give Anſwers with an audible Voice to ſuch important Queſtions as might be put to him. And when the *Philiſtines* took the Ark, the general Terror and Conſternation the People were under, can hardly be conceived or expreſſed. The *Glory was departed from Iſrael*; the Enemy had robbed them of their God. The High-Prieſt himſelf fell down dead, aſtoniſhed with this dreadful News, and his Daughter-in-law, the Wife of *Phineas*, died in Child-bed with two Sons, one of which

which to keep up the Memory of this fatal Time, ſhe named *Ichabod*, the *Glory is departed*. But the *Philiſtines*, as it happened very providentially, did not like their new God, who had quite demoliſhed *Dagon*, while he ſtayed in his Houſe; and therefore, they ſent him back again, to the inexpreſſible Joy of the People, who had hereby recovered their God again, after they had in a Manner given him up as quite loſt.

When *David* being ſettled in Peace, had purpoſed to build a Houſe for *the Lord to dwell in*, that he might from henceforth have a more ſtately and comfortable Habitation, and not be hurried about ſo from Place to Place in a Tent; the Prophet *Nathan* was ſent to him to forbid it, and put a ſtop to his Proceedings. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Shalt thou build me an Houſe for my Dwelling? For I have dwelt in no Houſe, ſince the time I brought the Children of* Iſrael *out of* Egypt *to this Day, but have walked in a Tent and Tabernacle. In all the Places wherein I have walked with all the Children of* Iſrael, *ſpake I one Word to all the Tribes of* Iſrael, *when I commanded their Judges to feed my People* Iſrael? *Or, ſaid I, Why build ye not me a Houſe of* Cedar *Trees?* After this, *David* is let know, that conſidering the poor, low, contemptible State from which he had been raiſed to the Kingdom, his Thoughts were too aſpiring; and that though God intended to have a better and more commodious Houſe to dwell in, than ever he had had before,

fore, yet not *David* himſelf, but his Son *Solomon*, was to have the Honour of it, 2 *Sam.* vii. And whoever will obſerve the Language and Style of theſe Hiſtorians, all along, while they are accommodating themſelves to the groſs Notions and Superſtitions of the common People, or ignorant Herd, muſt ſee that they ſpeak of God, as a national, local, and tutelar Deity; under which Notion the Populace always conceived of him, and worſhipped him: They worſhipped the true God therefore, only in Name, while they had the ſame Conceptions of him, that the Heathens had of their national Idols, or falſe Gods. They could have no juſt Notions or Apprehenſions of the infinite Perfections, univerſal Preſence, and providential Government of God, as the common Father and Friend of Mankind; nor could they have born any ſuch Repreſentation of their peculiar Idol or national God, but would have ſtoned the Prophet, who ſhould have come to them with any ſuch Doctrine. This, I think, is a plain and juſt Account of the Matter; and may give us an Idea of the two different Senſes of the Prophets, and moſt antient *Hebrew* Hiſtorians, and their different Ways of repreſenting *God* and *Providence*; the one agreeable to the Nature and Reaſon of Things, and the other accommodated to the groſs incurable Ignorance, Blindneſs, Obduracy, and inveterate Superſtition of their own People. This I take to be the true Key of theſe Writings, and without which it is impoſſible, in my Opinion,

to understand them, or to reconcile them to any Thing of Truth or Reason.

But to come more directly to the Miracles of *Moses*: This Author thinks it a most astonishing Supposition, that *Moses* himself should at that very Time have appealed to the Senses of the People, for the Truth of Things which had *never been done!* He ought to have added, which had never been *really done*, nor done in *Appearance*, or the Opinion of the People; and then perhaps his wonder might have abated. Did not the *Egyptian* Sorcerers appeal to the Senses of the People for what they did; or does he think, that they could really do such Things by their Enchantments? He has no Reason from the Story it self, that the Magicians did not do what they are said to have done, as well as *Moses*; or that his Miracles were more real than theirs. *Moses* we know, was skilled in all the Wisdom and Learning of *Egypt*; and if he could out-do them in their own Way, and work greater Wonders by his magic Wand, than they could by theirs, there was no Harm in that; while he was delivering his own Nation, and the Justice of the Cause was put upon mere Acts of Skill or Power. But the great Mystery is, How *Moses* should persuade such a vast Body of People, that he had led them through the Red-Sea, with all their Wives, Children, Sheep, and Cattle, if it had not been so? It may well be presumed, that this People having been so long Slaves in *Egypt*, knew but little

of the Situation of the Country, or of any Way out of *Egypt* into *Arabia*, and *Paleſtine*, between the *Mediterranean* and the *Red-Sea*; they might think that both Seas joined, that there was no Way out of the Land, but through the Sea; eſpecially, as the *Arabian* Merchants to avoid Land-Carriage, had brought their Goods into *Egypt*, over the Sea. And this might be more eaſily credible, if they were conducted only by Night, or in a thick dark Fog, with only the confuſed Light of Fire and Smoak, which kept them always in a Cloud. Under ſuch Circumſtances, ſo ignorant and ſtupid a People, and ſo infinitely fond of Prodigies and ſpecial Favours, might be eaſily perſuaded, that the dry Ground which they marched over, was the Bottom of the Sea, which God had cleared of all the Water, Rocks, and Quick-Sands, to make way for them, and for their Wives and Children, with all their Flocks and Herds, in one Night. At Mount *Sinai*, God is ſuppoſed to have delivered the Law in the Voice of Thunder, and ſpoke to *Moſes* in this terrible Way, while the Mountain was all in Fire and Smoak. But this Voice of Thunder the People could not articulate, and would have known nothing of it, had not *Moſes* writ it down, and delivered it to them in a Book, or engraven it on two Tables of Stone, as he had juſt received it from God himſelf. But that this People, as ſoon as they had got over the *Red-Sea*, and marched a little Way into the Wil-

derneſs, under the aſtoniſhing Light and Conviction of ſuch Miracles and Demonſtrations of divine Power, ſhould make a Calf, and aſcribe their Deliverance to the Gods of *Egypt* is moſt ſurprizing, and would render either the Story of the Miracles, or of ſuch more than brutiſh Stupidity, almoſt incredible. But there is another Miracle wrought ſoon after, which might ſeem as great and extraordinary, as dividing the *Red-Sea*, and that is *Moſes* making Water to flow out of a Rock, by only ſtriking it with his Rod, to ſatisfy this perfectly blind and ſtiff-necked People, when they were almoſt ready to periſh with Thirſt. But it looks as if this Miracle ſoon came to be ſuſpected, and *Moſes* had almoſt loſt his Credit by it. This People had never ſeen any freſh Water Springs in *Egypt*, where they had received all their Supplies of Water from the *Nile* by Canals cut for that Purpoſe ; and therefore, ſeeing Water flow out of a Rock, muſt at firſt appear as wonderful to them, as drying up the Sea. But when this came to be known as a common Work of God and Nature, and that all freſh Water Springs and Rivers flowed out of the Rocks and Mountains, *Moſes* was denied an Entrance into the Land of *Canaan* for ſuch Arrogance and Preſumption, though he was ſuffered to take a View of the Country, from the Top of a high Mountain, where he died.

But I ſhall not purſue this Account of Things through all its minute Circumſtances, or try how far it may be naturally accounted for, and how far not: And I ſhall only obſerve farther, that this Author, always good at Suppoſitions, and who continually ſuppoſes what he cannot prove, has here ſuppoſed a Thing which cannot be proved: And that is, that this Account was written by *Moſes* himſelf, and was as firmly believed then as it was in After-Ages. It is well known to the Learned, that moſt or all the biblical Books have received great Alterations and Additions from Time to Time, by Reviſers or Editors, who have lived at a great Diſtance from one another. The Book of *Nehemiah* brings down the Genealogy of the High-Prieſts to the Time of *Alexander* the Great, or as low as *Jaddua*, whom *Joſephus* makes Contemporary with *Alexander*, and to have been then High-Prieſt. The two Books of *Chronicles*, and the Books of *Daniel* and *Eſther* were evidently wrote long after the Captivity, and pretty low down in the *Perſian* Empire. There are ſeveral Paſſages and whole Chapters in *Iſaiah* that muſt have been writ after the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, as relating to the State and Circumſtances of the People at that time. The Book of *Pſalms* is plainly a Collection of Poems and Songs, which were compoſed by ſeveral Hands at great Diſtances of Time. The ninetieth *Pſalm* has been always aſcribed to *Moſes*, and ſome of them were

were writ after the Captivity. The ſecond Book of *Samuel* brings down the Hiſtory above forty Years after the Death of that Prophet; and the ten laſt Chapters of the firſt Book relate Things that were done after the Death of *Samuel*. And it might as well be ſaid, that the Books of *Kings* and *Judges* were wrote by thoſe Kings and Judges themſelves, as that any of the other hiſtorical Books were wrote by the Perſons whoſe Names they bear, and whoſe Actions they have given an Account of. But it is plain, that moſt of thoſe hiſtorical Books, which give an Account of the Lives, Actions, or Works, of ſuch or ſuch Perſons, ſpeak of them in the third Perſon, as any other Hiſtorian would. In the Book of *Geneſis* itſelf, Chapter xxxvi, we have an exact Liſt of all the Dukes and Kings of *Edom*, before there was any King in *Iſrael*; which, therefore, was wrote when there was a King in *Iſrael*, and conſequently could not have been earlier than the Time of *Samuel* and *Saul*. And it is probable, that *Samuel* wrote the whole Hiſtory of that Nation down to his own Time, and inſerted it under their proper reſpective Lives, which had never been ſo collected and digeſted before.

It does not appear, that *Moſes* writ any Thing himſelf, but the original Book of the Law, which was to be kept with the Ark, and never to be read by any but the Prieſt who was to officiate. The Hiſtory of the Creation and Deluge, the firſt Diviſion of

Mankind, and peopling the ſeveral Nations, and of the *Abrahamic* Family might have been written from Time to Time by ſeveral Hands before the Days of *Moſes*, and never collected and digeſted as we have it now, till *Samuel*'s Time. In ſhort, that thoſe Books were writ at that very Time, and by thoſe very Perſons, whoſe Names they bear, is a popular ſyſtematical Suppoſition, which this Author takes up and runs away with, though every learned Man muſt know the contrary.

But ſuppoſing all theſe Miracles to have been really wrought, I would only aſk *cui bono*, for what good End or Purpoſe were they done? Why only to deſtroy one Nation, the *Egyptians*, to enable the *Iſraelites* to deſtroy another Nation the *Canaanites*, by putting them all to the Sword, Men, Women, and Children, without Mercy or Humanity, in order to take Poſſeſſion of their Lands, and the Fruits of all their Labour and Induſtry; who were only quietly and peaceably enjoying their own, and had never done theſe *holy Butchers*, or *divine Conquerors*, the leaſt Injury. Had theſe Miracles been intended to prove any thing at all, it muſt have been to prove the divine Authority and Commiſſion of *Moſes*, to undertake and execute all this. But that it did not prove, and *Moſes* dying in the Mount, after he had kept the People almoſt ſtarving for forty Years in the Wilderneſs, is a ſufficient Proof that he had miſtaken his Commiſſion, as did all the Iſſues and Events of that bloody Conqueſt

Conqueſt afterwards. And was this an End worthy of ſuch peculiar miraculous Exertions and Diſplays of Power, from the moſt wiſe and righteous Governor of the World, and the common Father and Friend of Mankind? Or is ſuch a Story credible in itſelf, or poſſible in Nature? Such Accounts of Things muſt be looked upon by every Body, as the moſt incredible Fiction and Forgery that ever was invented, were it not for the Prejudice and ſtrong Prepoſſeſſion, contrary to all Reaſon and common Senſe, that thoſe Hiſtorians were infallible, and immediately inſpired. But I am ſure, that this miraculouſly ſtupid People were always inſpired and prepoſſeſſed with the Spirit of the Devil. And it is both a Matter of Grief and Wonder, that they ſhould be able thus to transfuſe their Spirit and Faith into Chriſtians.

Page 78, the Author takes Notice of a Conceſſion of mine, That the *Abrahamic* Covenant was *conditional*; and I am in no doubt, but it was ſo with regard to the promiſed Land, and all its other Bleſſings. But becauſe the Author ſeems to imagine, that this Conceſſion has given him a great Advantage, and that I had hereby given up the Argument, I ſhall endeavour to adjuſt this Account with him.

God had promiſed *Abraham*, that, beſides all ſpiritual Bleſſings to himſelf and Seed, he would give his Poſterity, or the Nation to be derived from him, the quiet peaceable Poſ-

ſeſſion of that whole Country in which he was then a Sojourner, and continue them in ſuch Poſſeſſion throughout all their Generations. And that moreover he would make them a Bleſſing to all other Nations, and the Inſtruments of propagating the Knowledge and Worſhip of the true God through all the World; provided that they would retain his true Religion themſelves, and continue in the pure Worſhip of the true God, and in the Practice of all Truth, Peace, and Righteouſneſs, as *Abraham* himſelf had done; and that upon theſe Terms the Promiſe ſhould be made good within four hundred Years, reckoning from the Birth of *Iſaac*, which was the laſt Seal and Confirmation of the Promiſe. This was the *Abrahamic* Covenant, and Condition upon which God had promiſed them the Land of *Canaan*, as well as all the other more ſpiritual Bleſſings. But it is plain, that the Conditions of this Covenant had never been comply'd with, and that all Right and Claim from it had been forfeited long before the Days of *Moſes*. The People had violated all the Terms of this Covenant, run into all the Idolatry and Superſtition of *Egypt*, and in all their Manners, Cuſtoms, and very Temper and Conſtitutions, were perfectly egyptianized before *Moſes* was born, and before they came to be enſlaved. For *Moſes* therefore, at that Time to trump up the *Abrahamic* Covenant, or pretend to any Right or Claim from thence, muſt have been without the leaſt Ground or Foundation; and beſides,

beſides, the Plan which *Moſes* had laid, or the Method which he had concerted at that Time to make himſelf Maſter of the Country, was abſolutely inconſiſtent with the Nature and Conditions of the *Abrahamic* Covenant. Had theſe People performed the Conditions of the Covenant, and God had made good his Promiſe to them, no doubt but he would have done it ſome Way or other in the Courſe of his Providence, in a Method of Truth, Peace, and Righteouſneſs; and not by Falſhood and Impoſtures, unnatural Cruelty and Violence, Murder, Blood, and Rapine, which was the Way that *Moſes* had contrived and projected for it. Had God fulfilled the Promiſe in his own Way, or in the Way of Truth and Righteouſneſs, he might have given them the Poſſeſſion of the Land, by making them the Inſtruments of converting the *Canaanites*, and bringing them to the Knowledge and Worſhip of the true God, and by enlarging their Borders, had there been any occaſion for it, without diſpoſſeſſing others, or making any violent Outrage or Invaſion upon natural Right or Property. Had *Abraham*, while he was a Sojourner there, intended to poſſeſs himſelf of the Country by force of Arms, he might eaſily have done it, as being ſuperior to them in ſtrength; and he needed not have purchaſed a ſmall Plat of Ground from the Children of *Heth*, with his own Money, when the People offered it to him for nothing, or any Part of the Country which he had a mind to; there being then Room

Room enough and to ſpare, for him and them too. Or had this Method of Conqueſt been thought of, while *Joſeph* was Prime-Miniſter in *Egypt*, and had the whole Force of the Kingdom at his Command, and while theſe *Hebrews* were poſſeſſed of all the ſtrong Holds and Magazines, and all the Places of Power and Profit in *Egypt*, they might eaſily have poſſeſſed themſelves of *Canaan* before the *Canaanites* had ſettled there, and ſo vaſtly improved and cultivated the Country. But then they muſt have been at the pains of Cultivation, Tillage, and Buildings, themſelves; and could not have acted the Part of ſuch Ruffians in taking Poſſeſſion by Force and Violence of other Peoples Property, Labour, and Lives.

This People while they remained Lords of *Egypt*, and held all the Caſtles, ſtrong Holds, and chief Places of Power and Profit which had been put into their Hands, had no thought of removing; but at laſt when they had been driven to the utmoſt Extremity, ſome Way or other muſt be found out to bring them off, or they muſt have all periſhed and been cut to Pieces there. But when this was done by an extraordinary Providence, they had no Houſe nor Home, but were about to make themſelves a Captain in the Wilderneſs, to return to *Egypt* again, and reſign all their Plunder, which *Moſes* had much ado to divert them from; and after all, they had no other Way of gaining any Settlement or Subſiſtence, but by deſtroying and plundering

firſt the *Midianites*, a rich Nation of Merchants, among whom *Moſes* had been ſuccoured and foſtered forty Years; and then diſpoſſeſſing the Inhabitants of the *Amorite* Mountains, and entering upon their Lands and Properties, againſt all the Laws of Nature and Nations. And that all this ſhould be done in the Name of God, under a pretence of divine Authority, and by a pretended Claim from the *Abrahamic* Covenant of Righteouſneſs, makes it ſtill worſe, and an Inſtance of Falſhood, Impoſture, and Contradiction, beyond all Example.

To my having ſaid that this People could not have acted under a divine Commiſſion, or by any Claim from God's Promiſe to *Abraham*, becauſe they could only drive the Inhabitants out of the Mountains, but not out of the Valleys, where they had Chariots of Iron, and a ſufficient Number of Horſe: This Author wittily replies, the Reaſon why they did not drive them out of the Plains, as well as the Mountains, was becauſe of their *Cowardice and Fear*, for otherwiſe *they might have driven them out if they would.* The Author may jeſt as long as he pleaſes, but moſt People will ſtill believe that the Reaſon why they did not drive them out, was becauſe they could not. And how ſhould they when God, as the Author obſerves, had declared before, that he would not drive them out altogether, but only *by little and little?* But God had never declared this, till *Moſes* himſelf had found, and was convinced

convinced by Experience, that they could not be driven out altogether, and that the *Iſraelites* had not ſtrength enough; but the Reaſon which the Hiſtorian gives for this, I am ſure, could not be God's Reaſon, that he would not drive them out altogether, *leſt the Land ſhould become deſolate, and the Beaſts of the Field ſhould multiply againſt them.* This People, as the Hiſtorian himſelf aſſures us, were Six Hundred Thouſand Men, between 20 and 60, beſides Women and Children, which muſt have made the whole Number of Souls between Three and Four Millions. But it is wonderful, methinks, that ſuch a Number of People ſhould not be ſufficient to ſtock and inhabit a Country, not a fourth Part ſo big as *England*, as this Country was not in its full Extent had they conquered it all. And yet a Land thus ſtocked with Inhabitants muſt have been more populous than *England*, the *Dutch* United Provinces, or any Part of *Europe* at this Day: Where we find no danger of a Deſolation for want of People, or an overgrowth of the Beaſts of the Field. But this Author is plainly very much diſtreſſed, let him turn which Way he will, he can find no ſure footing, and he can ſay nothing in one Part of the Argument, but what he muſt be forced to contradict in another: And I muſt leave the Author to conſider how far the Conqueſts of *Moſes*, *Joſhua*, or even of *David* himſelf, could be an Accompliſhment of the Promiſe made to *Abraham*; for I do not know that God ever

ever promiſed *Abraham* any Conqueſts at all, or that he ever intended to ſet them upon any ſuch bloody Work, as the Deſtruction of other Nations, in order to be a temporal and ſpiritual Bleſſing to them. This godly Method of propagating Religion by force of Arms, and eſtabliſhing Faith by Fire and Sword, was the Plan of *Moſes*, and purſued by *David*, but *Abraham* was a Man of a *quite different Character*.

SECT.

SECT. III.

The Author's Notion of Inſpiration, or immediate Revelation, refuted. His Pretence that the Ceremonial Law, or the Jewiſh Prieſthood and Sacrifices, had been aboliſhed by Revelation, ſhewn to be falſe and groundleſs. The whole Chriſtian Circumciſion, or Nazarene Jews, continued to obey the whole Law, as long as the Jewiſh Prieſthood and Sacrifice continued. St Paul *comply'd with this Law, only as a Matter of Liberty, and not as a Matter of Conſcience, as all the Chriſtian Jews did. St* Paul's *cenſuring this Law as carnal, blinding, and enſlaving in its own Nature, and conſequently that he could not, and did not, own its divine Inſtitution, fully proved, and made good againſt the Author's Exceptions. The Epiſtle to the* Hebrews *not St* Paul's, *but written after the Deſtruction of the Temple. The Caſe of human Sacrifices, as indulged in the Law, made good againſt all the Author's Evaſions.*

THE Author in his third Chapter, comes to conſider the Arguments which I had urged to ſupport my Notion of the Moſaic Ceremonial Law, from the Authority of St *Paul*, which he thinks *very extraordinary*, and yet

yet I cannot ſee that he has offered any Thing material againſt it.

The Author here in the firſt Place endeavours to eſtabliſh his own Notion, in Oppoſition to mine; and then to anſwer the Arguments which I had urged to the contrary. In the firſt Place he quotes St *Paul* to *Timothy*, commending him, for that from a Child he had known the *holy Scriptures*, that were able to make him *wiſe to Salvation*, *where by the holy Scriptures*, ſaith the Author, he inconteſtably *refers to the Writings of the Old Teſtament*, *thoſe of* Moſes *and the Prophets*, *which were the only Scriptures* Timothy *could have been acquainted with from his Childhood.* Well, this is plain enough, *Timothy* had ſtudied and practiſed from his Youth, thoſe enlightening purifying Doctrines of Scripture, which were able to make him wiſe to Salvation; that is, the Doctrines of Purity and Holineſs, Peace and Love, which are contained in the Scriptures, for the Purpoſes of *Doctrine*, *Reproof*, *Correction*, *Inſtruction*, and *Righteouſneſs*, and which to theſe Ends and Purpoſes were given by *Inſpiration of God.* Here the Apoſtle not only refers to theſe Writings in general, but particularly to thoſe doctrinal Parts of them, which *Timothy* had made his principal Study and Practice. But the Author here by *all Scripture*, means not all Scripture which had been given by *Inſpiration of God*, to the Ends and Purpoſes here ſpecified; but the *whole Scripture in groſs*, or every Thing that had been written, and which the Jews had

had received as authentic. But ſurely his Gloſs here muſt be wrong, or elſe he would make the Apoſtle in this Place, aſſert a Thing that is contrary to all Truth, Senſe, and Reaſon. The Apoſtle certainly could not here refer to the bare hiſtorical Parts of Scripture, which have no relation to Practice; as if the Hiſtorians had been inſpired and infallible in all their Accounts of Facts, notwithſtanding many Miſtakes and Inconſiſtencies in Hiſtory and Chronology, which their Writings abound with, and which yet the Jews had received as *authentic Scripture*. Nor could St *Paul* mean that Part of theſe Writings which relate only to the carnal blinding and enſlaving Ordinances of the Ceremonial Law, which this Apoſtle every where condemns and explodes, as containing no Part of the *Will of God, for our Salvation*.

But this being a proper Place for it, let us conſider a little what this Author can here mean by *Inſpiration*, and what Teſt or Rule of Judgment he has concerning it. He ſeems to talk of it abſolutely in the dark, and no more conveys any Idea of it, than one could to a blind Man of Light and Colours. It is plain, that under that extraordinary Diſpenſation of the Spirit, Men were not to receive or believe every *Spirit*, or every Matter of *Inſpiration*, but to try the *Spirits* or Doctrines of *Inſpiration*, whether they were of God or not. That is, to bring the Doctrines themſelves to the Teſt of Reaſon and ſound Judgment, and

to

to consider their Nature and Tendency, thereby to know whether they came from the Spirit of Truth and Righteousness, or of Error and Delusion.

Suppose any Doctrine or Doctrines to be delivered by an Angel in the most extraordinary Way possible, this extraordinary Manner of Conveyance, could be no Proof of the Doctrines, which might be all Error and Delusion, for any Thing the Senses could judge or determine about it. And therefore, the Doctrines themselves must be judged by the same Test and Rule, as if they had come to us in the most common and natural Way. The same Rule of Judgment and Reason therefore must be applied, in all Cases of internal Inspiration, or external Revelation. And if the Doctrines of Christ himself would not have born this Test of Light and Purity, they could not have been rationally received. And from hence, if an Angel from Heaven should have delivered any other Doctrines different from those of rational Light and Purity, they must have been rejected with what extraordinary miraculous Power soever they had been proposed, and delivered.

But this Author having secured St *Paul* on his Side by *Inspiration*, refers me to several other Passages out of that Apostle for my Conviction. The Passages he refers to, are those in which St *Paul* argues against the *Jews* from Scripture, as *divine Truth*, and the *Oracles of God*; of which Oracles, says he, *the*

Law of Moſes, *muſt certainly be regarded as the principal Part.* But I hope he will not ſay, that the carnal blinding and enſlaving Ordinances of the Ceremonial Law, which were this Apoſtle's *beggarly Elements*, and the *Rudiments of this World*, could be any Part of his *divine Oracles.* And yet even this too might in a proper Senſe enough be ſaid to come from God, and to have been ordered and directed by him in the Courſe of his Providence; and thus all Evil as well as Good, Plagues and Puniſhments, as well as Mercies and Bleſſings, are from God. All great Events that are brought about by any particular extraordinary Providence, beyond any human Foreſight or Contrivance, are in a ſpecial Senſe aſcribed to God. All extraordinary Degrees or Meaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge, which ſome Men are endued with above others, are conſidered as the peculiar Gift of God to them; and if this Wiſdom and Knowledge be in Things of a ſpiritual Nature, relating to the Knowledge of God, and our Duty and Happineſs, it is in a more ſpecial Senſe called divine Truth, or divine Wiſdom from God. But it will be impoſſible for me ever to pleaſe this Author, for I ſee he is reſolved never to ſuffer me to have any Thing from God. But, I hope, God will be more merciful, if I aſcribe every Thing to him, and own myſelf as his Creature, Subject, and abſolute Dependent. This Author cannot admit any Truth to be divine, or to come from God, unleſs

unleſs it comes from him immediately by Inſpiration or Revelation; but what that is, or what thoſe Truths are, which muſt be thus proved no body can tell, and he is not able to inform us. It will not content him, that the Scripture contains all Truth neceſſary to Salvation, unleſs the whole be thrown into the ſame Account in groſs, and without Diſtinction; as if every Thing there contained muſt be equally neceſſary, and all depend upon *ſupernatural Proof*. But St *Paul*, I am ſure, did not thus lump the *Jewiſh Writings*; and if he had, he could never have been the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*. He has got ſome general Words, and technical Terms which he has taken from his Syſtems, ſuch as *divine Truth*, Truth *coming from God*, *Inſpiration*, *Revelation*, &c. which he makes uſe of in a looſe declamatory Way, without ever affixing any clear determinate Ideas to them. It is really a very difficult Taſk to be forced to follow ſuch a Writer through all his ſuperficial preaching Harangues; but ſuch is my Fate, and I muſt ſubmit to it.

Page 85. The Author comes to prove the immediate divine Inſtitution of the Ceremonial Law; againſt what I had offered to the contrary from St *Paul*'s Authority. And here the Author, *Page* 87, before he comes to the Argument, premiſes ſome Things, which I muſt diſtinctly conſider; becauſe he diſcovers a great deal of Artifice and Prevarication, but nothing at all of Truth or Reaſon in it. He ſays, "It cannot be denied that in all his

" Epiſtles, he [St *Paul*] cites the Moſaical " and Prophetic Writings as of divine Autho- " rity; he delivered thoſe Writings to all the " Churches of the *Gentiles*, among whom he " preached, and whom he inſtructed in the " Chriſtian Religion, under the Notion of " Scripture, or divinely *inſpired Writings*." But when or where did this Apoſtle deliver the Writings of *Moſes* and the Prophets, to his *Gentile* Converts, or ground Chriſtianity upon them, among the *Gentiles*, as inſpired Writings? It is true, the Apoſtle always argues from the Authority of *Moſes* and the Prophets, againſt the *Jews*; which was an Authority they could not reject, but he never once entred into the Queſtion with them, about the immediate Inſpiration of thoſe Writings, and never ſo much as quotes them but to the *Jews*, where he found them diſperſed among the *Gentiles*, and that the *Jewiſh* or judaizing Teachers had been tampering with the *Gentile* Converts before, and furniſhed them with their own Writings. But that this Apoſtle himſelf furniſhed them with thoſe Writings, and founded the Truth of Chriſtianity upon them among the *Gentiles*, is a mere Fiction and Forgery, which this aſſuming Writer can give no Proof, or produce any Inſtances of, and yet he ſays, *this cannot be denied.* But, *Page* 88, " he " [St *Paul*] inſiſts upon it, that he had *recei-* " *ved an immediate Revelation from God*, " concerning the abrogating the Ceremo- " nial Law, as our Author himſelf acknow-

" ledges,

" ledges, *Page* 79." But this is another mere Fiction and Forgery, for never did St *Paul*, nor I, assert any such Thing. And therefore, all the Author's Rant upon it afterwards, can only serve to shew the Candour and Justice of such spiritual systematical Scholastics. St *Paul* had a Revelation from God, whether mediate or immediate, I cannot say, for he himself has said nothing of that, but a Revelation he had for the Gospel which he preached among the *Gentiles*, independent of the Law of *Moses*; but if he had received any such Revelation with regard to the *Jews*, he could not have complied with it himself, nor could the *Jewish* Converts have complied with it as they did. For, I hope, he will not say, that the *many Thousands* that *believed* in and about *Jerusalem*, were not all *zealous for the Law*. But what Law were they so zealous for? Why surely, for the Ceremonial Law; for there never was the least Doubt or Contention about the other: And no Body would pretend to say, that the Moral Law was repealed by Revelation. There was therefore, no Law nulled or reversed by Revelation, but the Ceremonial Law, which only the *Jews* had been subject to before, and bound them still as much as ever; and St *Paul* himself as a *Jew* submitted to it, whenever he came to *Jerusalem*, and so as to appear in publick.

In the very Place which this Writer refers to, for my owning that the Ceremonial Law had been abrogated by a Revelation to St *Paul*, I

had proved the quite contrary, and the whole Proceedings of that Council at *Jeruſalem*, and the great Queſtion they had then before them, is a Demonſtration to the contrary. The Queſtion then was, *whether thoſe who* from among the *Gentiles*, had been turned to God, *i. e.* St *Paul*'s heathen Converts, ſhould obey the whole Law, if not, what Part of the Ritual Law they ſhould be bound to, for there was no Diſpute about the Moral Law. And here, after much Debate and warm Contention, it was at laſt agreed to, that thoſe heathen *Gentiles* who had been converted to Chriſtianity, ſhould not be bound to Circumciſion, and Obedience to the whole Ceremonial Law; but only to the general Laws of Proſelytiſm, which all the Proſelytes of the Gate had ever complied with, upon the Authority of *Moſes*. Here then it is evident from the very Nature of the Queſtion, that this *circumciſed Council*, the Apoſtles, Elders, and Brethren, met at *Jeruſalem*, obeyed the whole Ceremonial Law themſelves, as a Matter of *Religion* and *good Conſcience* towards God, and the only Matter in Debate, was how far the heathen *Gentiles* muſt come into it. And with much ado, they were brought to exempt the heathen Converts from Circumciſion, and Obedience to the whole Ritual Law; but abſolutely inſiſted on their Compliance with the Law of Proſelytiſm, *i. e.* A total Separation from the reſt of the World, with regard to any friendly Correſpondence, Cohabitation, Intermarriages, Eating

ing and Drinking together at the ſame Table, *&c.* But I have ſo very largely conſidered this before, that I need not dwell longer upon it here.

St *Paul* in this Caſe pretended to no Revelation from God, as abrogating this Law, with regard to the *Jews*, and particularly that Council. And had he urged any ſuch Thing, it muſt have been unanimouſly rejected and exploded as a mere Impoſture, and vain Pretenſion, as God had revealed no ſuch Matter to any of them; but he only pleaded and ever inſiſted on it afterwards, that he had a Revelation from God, which exempted the *Gentile* Converts from any Obligation at all to this Law, either in Whole, or in Part. But our Author weakly calls this an Abrogation of the Ceremonial Law, by an immediate Revelation to St *Paul*, and moſt unrighteouſly urges my Conceſſion for it. This Law could not be abrogated or repealed with regard to the *Gentiles*, who had never been bound by it; and as to its continued Obligations to the Chriſtian *Jews*, it never came into the Queſtion. But our Author having weakly miſtaken, or wilfully miſrepreſented the Caſe, as weakly or unjuſtly triumphs upon it, as if he had gained a Victory, and wreſted St *Paul* out of my Hands.

But the plain Truth of the Caſe and Force of the Argument lies here: The circumciſed Chriſtians, or Chriſtian *Jews*, ſubmitted to the whole Ceremonial Law, and were as zealous

for it after, as they had been before their Converſion; and St *Paul* himſelf complied with this Law, occaſionally as a *Jew*, and when he happened to be in the Country, and was called upon to it. This I take to be a plain Matter of Fact. Now if the Ceremonial Law, as of original *divine Inſtitution*, had been abrogated and ſet aſide by a particular Revelation to this Apoſtle, he could not have complied with it all, upon any Principles of Reaſon, Religion, or Conſcience: But as an original divine Inſtitution not thus repealed, he muſt have complied with it as a Matter of Religion, and good Conſcience towards God; which yet he every where proteſts and declares againſt, and puts this Compliance or Noncompliance upon the Foot of Liberty and human Prudence. If the Author would but conſider, and take in this ſhort View of the Caſe, the Controverſy might be ſoon brought to an Iſſue, but if he will not, or cannot do this, I ſhould be ſorry to be obliged to follow him, as long as he might think fit, to lead me thus a *Fox-Hunting*; I would not call it a *Wild-Gooſe* Chace, becauſe, I think, I am not purſuing an *untamed Creature*.

It is as certain as any Thing can be from Scripture, that the Apoſtles, Elders, and Brethren of the Circumciſion, ſubmitted to the whole Ritual Law, as a Matter of Religion and good Conſcience towards God; and ſo it muſt neceſſarily have been to them, who thought it an immediate divine Inſtitution, or the Law of

God himſelf never repealed; and it is very plain from their Practice, that it was never abrogated to them, or that they knew nothing of any ſuch Repeal. And St *Paul* does not argue againſt this Law, as being once a neceſſary Part of *Religion* or *Obedience* to God, tho' now repealed and abrogated, and therefore no longer binding; but he argues againſt it every where, as a mere human, carnal, political Thing; and being in itſelf exceedingly Burdenſome, and of a very blinding, enſlaving Nature, they were at Liberty to ſet it aſide, and ought to do ſo now, under the clearer Light of the Goſpel. What St *Paul* argued againſt by Revelation, was the Impoſition of this Law, either in Whole, or in Part, upon the *Gentiles*; yet he does not argue againſt it with the *Jews*, as what had been once a Matter of Religion and Conſcience, or neceſſary in Obedience to the Will of God, but was now formally and expreſsly an immediate Revelation repealed, and ſet aſide as ſuch. Had there been any ſuch Revelation, or formal Repeal, *Peter*, and the other Apoſtles and Teachers of the Circumciſion, muſt doubtleſs have known it, and muſt have been firſt made to them, becauſe they were more directly and immediately concerned in it. But they had been now preaching the Goſpel above twenty Years, and yet knew nothing at all of any ſuch Matter. This Law was vacated and ſet aſide to St *Paul*, though a *Jew*, as to any Obligation upon Conſcience, as ſoon as he came to have more Light and a better

better Understanding of Things; and then he argues against it, from the Nature of the Thing itself, and not from any Repeal by Revelation. He proves, that it never was, or could have been, any Part of justifying Righteousness, or a Matter of Religion and Conscience, towards God, to an Understanding and Conscience rightly informed; and that though he was in that Way of Thinking once, as well as the rest of the Nation, and as the Apostles, and Teachers of the Circumcision continued to be now, yet this had been all owing to the Ignorance, and blind Zeal, which they had been educated and brought up in; one would think it impossible for any man to read St *Paul*'s Writings, with the least Judgment or Impartiality, without seeing this to have been the true and real State of the Case. And as to *Peter*, it is very plain, that he was off and on in his Religion, or sometimes of one Side, and sometimes of the other. His Judgment at first seems to have been with St *Paul*, that no Part of the Ritual Law ought to be imposed on the *Gentiles*, not even that total absolute Separation from the rest of the World, which the Law had enjoined upon the Proselytes of the Gate; and therefore, he continued for some Time at *Antioch* with St *Paul*, to eat and drink in common with the *Gentiles*. But he had not Courage and Resolution enough to stand to this, against the whole Body of the Christian Circumcision; and therefore soon broke with that Apostle of the *Gentiles*,

tiles, and ſet himſelf up at the Head of the oppoſite Party. I had, as I thought, ſufficiently repreſented and cleared up all this before, far enough to have prevented ſuch wretched Cavils as this Writer brings; but without anſwering any thing that had been ſaid, he rambles on upon a Preſumption, that the Ceremonial Law had been at firſt in St *Paul*'s Account an immediate divine Inſtitution, and conſequently a real Matter of Religion and Conſcience to thoſe who were under it, but was now vacated and done away, or repealed by Revelation; but for this, he has not the leaſt Authority from St *Paul*, nor any other Apoſtle. This Apoſtle every where aſcribes his ſtrict Adherence to, and great Zeal for, this Part of the Law to his Ignorance and blind Zeal at that Time, while he thought it a Matter of Religion and Conſcience, and not to his Obedience to *divine Authority*, and a real Matter of Religion and Conſcience; as it muſt have been had that Law been of divine Inſtitution; when our Author has ſufficiently conſidered this, he may perhaps find it neceſſary to alter his Scheme a little, and to anſwer the *Moral Philoſopher* upon ſome other Principles. But whatever he may do as to this, I am pretty ſure, that he will never be able to ſupport his own Syſtem, or to maintain the Character of a *rational Divine*, in the Way he goes now. For nothing I think can be plainer than this, from the New Teſtament, that the *Nazarene* or Chriſtian *Jews* ſubmitted to the whole

whole Law, as long as their Temple was ſtanding, and their Sacrifices continued. And this Writer's great Confidence to the contrary, only ſhews, that he has taken his Notions from his Syſtems, and not from the Bible. And though his ſyſtematical Divinity, may get him a Maintenance, and ſerve him to harangue upon, it can never enable him to argue.

It would not be worth while to follow the Author any further in his general looſe Harangues; St *Paul*'s Principles and Practice are perfectly conſiſtent in my Scheme, and he cannot be charged with any thing of Artifice or Prevarication. But in this Author's Way, it will be impoſſible to juſtify that Apoſtle's Conduct upon any Principles of Reaſon, Religion, or Conſcience. And therefore, I believe the Apoſtle would chooſe to ſtay with me rather than put himſelf in worſe Hands; and I cannot believe, that *Moſes* and the *Prophets*, our Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*, or his *Apoſtles*, would ever make Choice of ſuch an *Advocate*. I ſhall therefore proceed to conſider the Anſwers which he has given, to what I had urged, concerning the Oppoſition between *Moſes* and St *Paul*, or between the *Jewiſh* and Chriſtian Religions. He would fain perſuade us, that they are both one and the ſame Religion, and according to him *Chriſtianity* itſelf, can be nothing elſe but *myſtical Judaiſm*.

I had obſerved, that *Moſes* had given the Law to the People, as a perpetual ſtanding Ordinance throughout all their Generations,

and

and that consequently, any Abrogation or Repeal of it, must be contrary to the Nature, and declared Intention of the Law itself. To this the Author is pleased to answer, *Page* 99, That the Words *for ever, everlasting*, &c. do not always signify to the *End of the World.* This is sure enough, but certainly a Law given which was to bind for ever, and throughout all their Generations, must signify, throughout all their Generations, or as long as they should continue a People, or Body Politic, if it had any Sense at all. And it is very plain, that the whole Nation ever understood it so, and that the *Nazarene*, or Christian, *Jews*, submitted to the whole Law, and were as zealous for it, as any of the rest. And in this Case, St *Paul* himself appeals to the whole Nation, and to the *Roman* Courts, that they had nothing to charge him with as a *Jew*, in regard to any Breach or Violation of the Law.

I had urged, That *Moses* had established Propitiations and Atonements for Sin, by the Blood of Beasts, and that St *Paul* had declared it to be impossible, that the Blood of Bulls and Goats should take away Sin. *Page* 102, The Author grants this Contradiction, and yet says, it is no Contradiction. *For though the Blood of Beasts might take away Sin under the Law, yet it could not do it now the Law was abolished.* But it is evident, That the Apostle does not argue from the Repeal of the Law, but from the Impossibility of the thing itself; and a thing that is once impossible, must be always

always ſo. But the Author goes all along upon a Suppoſition, that this Law was an original divine Inſtitution, and conſequently neceſſary in point of Religion, and good Conſcience towards God; but that it was afterwards repealed and ſet aſide by Revelation. Had this been ſo, the Practice of it muſt afterwards have been as unlawful, as it was neceſſary before. And yet the Practice of the whole Church of *Jeruſalem*, and this Apoſtle's own Practice, muſt ſtand againſt him, and convict him, if he is capable of Conviction. But indeed this Writer does not ſeem very capable of thinking out of his own Way: He is got into a common ſyſtematical Track which he muſt keep in, as long as he can talk at all.

But this Syſtematiſt found his firſt Shift would not do, and therefore he tries to ſolve the ſame Difficulty another Way, *Page* 103. "The Apoſtle plainly ſhews us how to reconcile theſe, by declaring that the Gifts "and Sacrifices under the Law *ſanctified to* "*the purifying of the Fleſh*; and this external "Atonement is what *Moſes* intends, as the immediate Conſequence of the Prieſt's ſprinkling the Blood." The Author goes to harangue upon this, as if he was making the Matter as clear as the Sun; but I cannot for my Life underſtand, or make any Senſe of, this external legal Purification and Atonement for Sin, where no Sin had been committed, for which the Law required the *Sacrifice*, and no Sin could be *pardoned* or done away by it.

Was

Was *legal Sin* no *Sin*, and legal Forgiveneſs no Pardon or Remiſſion of Sin at all? I cannot conceive what Sin could be forgiven, or atoned for, by a Man's offering a Sacrifice in the legal Way, unleſs it was the Sin of not offering it, which would have been puniſhed with Death, for any wilful preſumptuous Refuſal. But when a Man had brought his Sacrifice, and paid his Fine according to Law, the Prieſt forgave him the Sin which he had never committed, and, by ſprinkling the Blood, declared, that he had, as to this Act, ſatisfied the Law. Could this Syſtematiſt have proved, that Sacrifices were any real Atonements at all under the Law, or that any Puniſhment was remitted or taken off by them, excepting the Puniſhment which muſt have been inflicted for Diſobedience, in Caſe they had not thus complied with the Law, he had done ſomething to the Purpoſe. But he could not do this, and yet talks as *ex cathedra*, and as a Maſter inſtructing his Pupils.

But by this Author's Way of talking about *Types*, he ſeems to underſtand no more of this typical, allegorical, or alluſive Method, as to the Nature and Uſe of it, than a Child, when he is taught ſuch Things in his Catechiſm. Any thing may be a Type of any other Thing, or Number of Things, where there is any the leaſt remote Similitude or Reſemblance. Thus the Wilderneſs, may be a *Type* of the *World*; and the Land of *Canaan* of *Heaven*; the Spring, the Altar, with the ſacrificial Blood, might

might have ſome remote Reſemblance to the ſhedding Chriſt's Blood upon the Croſs; and the Bond-woman and the Free-woman, might have ſome Reference or Similitude to the Law and the Goſpel. But would any Man in his Wits ſay, That theſe Things had originally any ſuch Senſe, Meaning, or Conſtruction, becauſe they were afterwards thus referred to in a Way of Allegory, Simile, and Alluſion. Did the Wilderneſs, ſignify and allude to the whole World, and *Canaan* ſignify and repreſent Heaven: Did the ſprinkling the Blood upon the Altar, ſignify the Crucifixion of Chriſt, and *Hagar* and *Sarah*, the Law and the Goſpel, in the ſpiritual Senſe and Reference of thoſe Times? Such Allegories and Alluſions may ſerve for Illuſtration, in comparing one thing to another, where there is any Reſemblance, but they can eſtabliſh no doctrinal Truth; and when taken literally, and according to the ſtrict Nature and Reaſon of Things, they can ſerve to eſtabliſh nothing but Falſhood and Nonſenſe. And whatever ſcholaſtic Whims this Gentleman's Head may be filled with, he may depend on it, that St *Paul* was a wiſer Man, and knew nothing at all of his *ſyſtematical Chriſtianity*.

I had endeavoured to ſhew the abſolute Repugnancy between the Ceremonial Law and the Goſpel in their own Nature, and from the fundamental Principles upon which, both the one and the other are grounded; the one being a Scheme and Diſpenſation of Darkneſs,

Slavery,

Slavery, and Superſtition, but the other of rational Light, Liberty, and true Religion. Now, if this be ſo, and was ſo in St *Paul*'s Opinion, it muſt follow, that ſuch a blinding, enſlaving Scheme of Superſtition, and falſe Religion, could never have been a divine Inſtitution, or any Matter of expreſs poſitive Authority from God, at any time, or to any Nation. Indeed, God might think fit in his Providence to leave this People under ſuch Blindneſs, Obduracy, Superſtition, and falſe Notions of Religion for a long time, without any extraordinary Interpoſition to prevent or cure it, as it is plain he did. But that God, after 1500 Years, ſhould change his Mind, and inſtitute a Religion quite contrary to what he had inſtituted before, and as oppoſite to it as Light is to Darkneſs; this, I ſay, can only be the Object of a ſyſtematical and ſupernatural Faith. And, I hope, this Author will not ſay, that the Law was not the Religion of the *Jews*, ſince every divine Inſtitution muſt be a matter of Religion and Conſcience; and there can be no poſſible Diſtinction between Law and Religion, where God himſelf is the Lawgiver.

If this Law had not been inſtituted by any poſitive, divine Authority, there could be no occaſion for any ſuch Repeal or Abrogation of it, and this I take to be the Caſe in Fact. But if the Author cannot prove the poſitive divine *Inſtitution*, he ought at leaſt prove ſuch an *Abrogation* of this Law, for otherwiſe his whole Scheme will be overthrown at once, and

he must entirely alter his System. But if there had been any such Repeal of the Law, it is certain, that *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, and the rest of the Apostles and Teachers of the Circumcision, knew nothing of it; for they continued in the Use of Circumcision, and submitted to the whole Law, for at least thirty Years after the Death of Christ, and after they had received the *Holy Ghost*. This Writer, therefore, cannot build his typical, allegorical, Christian Priesthood, upon a Repeal of the *Jewish* Priesthood, for it was never thus abrogated to them, and it could not be abrogated to the *Gentiles* who had never been under it, or bound by it. And when he comes to consider the Matter farther, and take his Notions from Scripture itself, rather than from modern Systems, and School-Divinity, he will find that the Nazarene or Christian *Jews* at that Time, were only a Party or Sect of *Jews*, or such among them as believed Jesus to be the Christ, or the national Messiah, whom the Prophets had foretold. And excepting this one single Point, they never altered their Religion, as to any thing else, either in Faith or Practice, but continued in Obedience to the whole Law as before. St *Paul* himself circumcised *Timothy* to please the *Jews*, *i. e.* the Nazarene or Christian *Jews*, for this Apostle never did any thing to humour or gratify the unbelieving *Jews*. It was such of the Pharisees as had joined this Christian Party, that struggled so hard in the Council for imposing Circumcision, and the whole Law, upon the

the *Gentiles*, but tho' theſe High-flyers were over-ruled, and the Council came to more moderate Terms, with regard to the *Gentiles*; yet they were far from thinking themſelves exempted from ſuch total Conformity and Obedience to the Law. And even St *Paul*, himſelf, when he was among them, acted as a *Jew*, and ſubmitted to this Law, though not upon the ſame Principle of Religion and Conſcience as they did, but only as a Matter of Liberty.

The *Jewiſh* Prieſthood therefore was diſſolved and ſet aſide not by *Revelation*, but by Providence. They continued their Prieſthood and Sacrifices as long as they had a Temple, and were in Poſſeſſion of the holy Ground, to which that Sort of Worſhip had been confined; but when they were driven out of that, the Prieſthood muſt be diſſolved, and the Sacrifices ceaſe of Courſe.

But the great Argument for a Chriſtian everlaſting *Prieſthood*, without any Change or Succeſſion of Perſons, and yet analagous to that of the Law, as a Method of Atonement by an imputed Righteouſneſs, has been chiefly grounded on the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*. When or by whom this anonymous Epiſtle was writ, is very uncertain, and a Point which the moſt learned Critics could never agree about; ſome have thought it to be St *Paul*'s, but without any original authentic Authority or Teſtimony. The chief Reaſon aſſigned for this, has been the rabbinical *Jewiſh* Learning contained in that Book, as if no other Perſon at that Time could

have been Maſter of ſo much Learning of this Sort as is here to be met with; whereas there is nothing in it, but what was commonly known to all the *Jews*, and as the Epiſtle is directed to the *Hebrew Jews* in general, nothing is mentioned or inſiſted on out of their own Writings, but what they all knew and believed. But abating this trifling Pretence to St *Paul*'s Authority, it is plain to me, that it is not written in that Apoſtle's Style and Language. There is nothing in it of his loftineſs of Expreſſion and ſtrength of Imagination, as appears in all his genuine Epiſtles, eſpecially where he is ſpeaking of Chriſt, and the Goſpel-Diſpenſation. And as St *Paul* ſet his Name to all his undoubted genuine and authentic Writings, and left himſelf accountable for them as the Author, this alone is enough to ſet aſide this nameleſs Epiſtle, ſo far as that no Man can have a Right to urge it under St *Paul*'s Authority. But it ſeems plain to me, that this Epiſtle, whoever was the Author, muſt have been written after the Deſtruction of the Temple, and the Ceſſation of the *Jewiſh* Prieſthood and Sacrifices; becauſe it never mentions the Temple or Sacrifices as then ſubſiſting, but always ſpeaks of the *Jewiſh* Prieſthood and Oeconomy as aboliſhed, done away, and ceaſed. Which ſurely St *Paul*, himſelf, would never have done in his Time, eſpecially to the *Hebrew Jews* who were all under it, even the Chriſtian *Jews* themſelves, and while the Apoſtle himſelf was complying with it, occaſionally as he came among them.

But

But however this might be, or when or by whom this Book might be written, our Author's Conceit, that the *Jewiſh* Prieſthood and Sacrifices had been aboliſhed, ſet aſide, and done away, while the whole Chriſtian Circumciſion was under it, and ſubmitting to it, is ſo wild and extravagant a Notion, that it deſerves no Conſideration at all.

SECT. IV.

That the Law of Moſes *was merely political, and could extend only to outward Practice proved, and the Author's Objections to it ſhewn to be weak and trifling. That the Law indulged perſonal Intemperance or Exceſs in Wine and Women, and made no ſufficient Proviſion againſt it by any civil Penaltics, proved and farther confirmed. That this Nation was by their very Conſtitution ſeparated from, and put into a State of Enmity and War with all other Nations, farther confirmed and juſtified. Perſecution for Conſcience or Religion, by puniſhing Idolatry with Death, and deſtroying Idolaters by Fire and Sword, eternally and immutably contrary to the Law of Nature and Reaſon, and no particular Circumſtances under the* Moſaic *Diſpenſation could alter this Caſe or juſtify ſuch a Law. God had never promiſed the* Iſraelites, *or Seed of* Abraham, *an everlaſting Inheritance, or any Poſſeſſion at all, in* Canaan *to be obtained by Conqueſt, Murder, and Deſtruction; and this Plan of gaining Poſſeſſion, as projected by* Moſes, *was a Violation of all the Terms and Conditions of the* Abrahamic *Covenant, and a Forfeiture of all the Promiſes and Bleſſings of it. The Caſe of the firſt born,*

as

as ſtated in the Moral Philoſopher, *farther conſidered and juſtified againſt the Author's Exceptions.*

THE Author having thus removed the Objections I had made to the external Evidence of the Law, comes in his fourth Chapter to conſider what I had offered with Regard to the internal Evidence or Characters, many of which appeared to me as inconſiſtent with any immediate divine Authority or poſitive Inſtitution. I am ſorry he has run out into ſo many long impertinent Declamations upon theſe Matters, which can only ſerve to amuſe the Reader and lead him off from the Queſtion; but I ſhall take the Pains to follow him ſo far as the Argument requires.

To my having urged that the Law of *Moſes*, as to its Nature and Conſtitution, could only relate to outward Practice, ſo far as to ſecure the Peace and Well-being of Society, but could not reach the Heart and Conſcience with Regard to the Temper and Diſpoſition of the Mind, or the internal Principle of Action, in which all Religion muſt conſiſt. To this the Author replies, *Pag.* 117. "But it is capable "of as clear a Proof as any Thing whatſoever, "and our Author himſelf is ſenſible of it, as "is evident from what he makes *Theophanes*, "his Chriſtian *Jew*, object againſt *Philalethes*, "his Moral Philoſopher, upon this Head." This Author concludes, That becauſe *Moſes* every where ſuppoſes the Reaſonableneſs and

Fitneſs of an inward right Temper and Diſpoſition of Mind, therefore it was the Subject-Matter of his Law, and that it was the proper End and Deſign of the Law to obtain and ſecure this inward right Temper and Diſpoſition. But nothing can be more abſurd and contradictory, than to ſuppoſe that an inward right Temper and Diſpoſition of Mind can be obtained or procured by external Force and Compulſion. All political Laws muſt preſuppoſe the Reaſonableneſs of Truth and Righteouſneſs, as to the inward Temper and Diſpoſition, or otherwiſe it would be unjuſt to force or compel the outward Practice, but if the inward Principle is not found or ſuppoſed in Fact, the outward Practice, or political Part, muſt be ſecured and guarded by Force for the Good of Society; this is all that can poſſibly be done by any temporal penal Laws. The Law of *Moſes* was merely temporal and political, and its Sanctions were all temporal; but the Law of Righteouſneſs is quite of another Nature, and what none but God can take Cognizance of, ſo as to reward the obedient and puniſh the diſobedient; and this he does in a Way and Method abſolutely above and beyond all human Judgment; but *Moſes*, with Regard to the People of *Iſrael*, acted the Part of a Prophet and Preacher of Righteouſneſs, as well as of a Lawgiver and Judge, in the making and executing his own Laws. But whenever *Moſes* preaches Moral Truth and Righteouſneſs to the People, this Author pretends that he is enforcing and executing his own

own Law; and as to the Law which forbids the coveting the Goods or Property of another, it muſt relate to the outward Act, Robbery, Violence, or Rapine, in forcibly ſeizing the Goods or Property of another, and not barely to the inward Act of coveting, deſiring, or wiſhing for another Man's Property, which could not poſſibly fall under the Cognizance of any human penal Law. And if this was not the meaning, There would be a Law againſt Theft, but no Law againſt Robbery, Rapine, or Plunder, in the whole Decalogue. But this Author's Zeal for *Moſes* riſes ſo very high, that he ſeems fond of making him a *Judge of Conſcience*, and of mounting him to the *Throne of God.*

St *Paul* every where diſtinguiſhes the Law of *Moſes* from the Law of Faith, Fidelity, or Righteouſneſs towards God. He proves at large, that Righteouſneſs could never be obtained by the Law, which was a Law of Works or outward Obedience only; and that the Law of Faith, or Righteouſneſs, by which Men muſt be juſtified and accepted of God, was the ſame before the Law as afterward, and muſt be always immutably the ſame from the beginning of the World to the End. This Apoſtle labours the Point very much, to ſhew that the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, or the Righteouſneſs which he came to reſtore, eſtabliſh, and confirm, was the very ſame with the *Abrahamic* Righteouſneſs, or the eternal, immutable Law, Covenant, or Rule of Righteouſneſs, by which *Abraham* was accepted,

and

and that this Covenant was not peculiar to any one People or Nation, but had been made in *Abraham* with all the Faithful in all Nations, and to the End of the World. I have been the larger upon this, becauſe our Author ſeems willing to confound the moſt different and oppoſite Things in the World. And indeed I believe he would confound any Thing, and affirm or deny any Thing for the Sake of contradicting me. And *pag.* 122, he quotes a Paſſage out of *Deuteronomy*, *Chap.* xxix. 19, 20. to prove that the Law of *Moſes* extended to Gluttony, Drunkenneſs, and ſuch Acts of perſonal Intemperance as only hurt the Man himſelf, without directly affecting others. But it is very plain, that *Moſes* in this Place is applying himſelf to the People as a Prophet or Preacher of Righteouſneſs, as he frequently does in other Places, with Regard to Sins which could not come under the Cognizance and penal Sanctions of the Law. He there threatens ſuch Sinners with the Vengeance of God, as Offenders againſt the Law and Rule of Righteouſneſs, but he does not command the Law to be executed upon them, or ſay that they ſhall ſurely be put to Death, or undergo any other Puniſhment in a Courſe of Law. And if this Author would prove any Thing againſt me, he muſt produce ſome Law, Statute, or Judgment of *Moſes*, where ſuch Acts of perſonal Intemperance are made penal. But for Want of this no Nation in the World ever ran into greater Exceſſes and Enormities of this Kind, as appears from the Declamations of the

Prophets againſt it in many Places. And as theſe were very groſs and open Immoralities, not particularly provided or guarded againſt by Law, I think any Man but the Author muſt own that the Law was herein defective.

To my ſaying that this Nation had been put into a State of Enmity and War with all the reſt of the World, ſo far as that they could not ſo much as eat or drink with other People, or join with them in any the leaſt Act of Civility and common Reſpect, the Author replies, *page* 126. "That this is an unfair Repreſenta-" tion. It muſt be conſidered indeed that the " Law of *Moſes*, though of divine Inſtitution " and Authority, never was intended to be an " univerſal Law obligatory to all Mankind, " but was peculiarly deſigned for that one Na-" tion, to whom it was immediately directed " and publiſhed; and it was in the Nature of " a ſpecial Covenant between God and them." But was not this an excellent Way to make them a Bleſſing to all other Nations, and the Means or Inſtruments of propagating the true Religion in the World, by obliging them not ſo much as to converſe with them, or to come into their Company, ſo far as they could avoid it, nor to ſhew them the leaſt Marks of common Reſpect, Civility, or Decency? If this was not putting them into a State of Enmity and War with all the reſt of Mankind, by the very Nature of their Conſtitution, I cannot conceive what ſhould be ſo. I believe this Author can hardly tell me what more effectual Method could

could have been taken to eſtabliſh a State of eternal Enmity and War between them and the reſt of the World; or how it ſhould be poſſible, that a People thus conſtituted could propagate the true Religion to other Nations, but by force of Arms. This was the Method by which *Moſes* and his Succeſſors got their Settlement in that Country at firſt, and by which they violated all the Terms and Conditions of the *Abrahamic* Covenant or Law of Righteouſneſs. And when this Declaration of War with the reſt of the World had been once made and confirmed by their very Conſtitution, it could not be otherwiſe in the natural Courſe of Things, but that the War muſt be continued till one Side or other had got the Victory, and this proved to be the Caſe in Fact.

The Author obſerves in the next Page, that this People were not only obliged to love and ſhew Kindneſs to *one another but to Strangers too.* And here he quotes the ſeveral Texts out of the Law, which obliged them to ſhew ſuch Kindneſs to *the Strangers*; but he does not tell the Reader what *Strangers* theſe were, which muſt quite have ſpoiled his Harangue. It is evident from all the Paſſages he quotes, that they were their own naturalized Strangers, or the Proſelytes who lived among them, and who worſhipped the *ſame God*, and made a Part of the *ſame Nation*; but they could ſhew no Kindneſs, nor have any Thing to do with any other Strangers who were not of their Nation and Religion. But thoſe Proſelytes of the Gate

though

though they were not circumciſed, yet they complied with the ſacrificial Part of the Law, and paid their Tithes and Dues to the Prieſts. And therefore *Solomon* when he built the Temple, aſſigned a particular Court for thoſe devout *Gentiles*, who came up with their Gifts and Offerings to *Jeruſalem*; and he prays for them, that God would beſtow on them all the Favours and Bleſſings of his own People.

This Writer indeed has the Aſſurance afterwards, *Page* 129. to deny that the Proſelytes of the Gate were naturalized Strangers, or that they were conſidered and owned as Members of the ſame Society. I am very ſure, that by the Law of *Moſes* they were to be received, conſidered, and treated, as Brethren and Fellow-Citizens, and were under the Protection of the Law as much as the circumciſed *Jews* themſelves, while they lived among them; and this was all that I meant by *Naturalization*; but if this Writer has any other more peculiar Senſe, I would not diſpute with him about a Word. But this is plain that all their Friendſhip, Converſation, Intercourſe, and Familiarity, was to be confined to their own Religion, ſo far as owning and worſhipping the one God was any peculiar Religion of theirs; and with the reſt of the World they were put into a State of Enmity and War. But it is impoſſible that this People ſhould ever have been intended or promiſed as a Bleſſing to other Nations, upon a Foot that would not ſuffer them to have any peaceable Intercourſe or Communication with

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any Nation but their own, and any Man who will but open his Eyes may ſee, that as ſoon as the *Moſaic* Diſpenſation took place, the *Abrahamic* Covenant, or Law of Righteouſneſs, was ſet aſide. But this it is for an *ignorant Fellow* to have to do with a *Maſter of Arts.*

This Author pretends, That though Perſecution for Conſcience ſake, or eſtabliſhing true Religion by force of Arms, would be wrong now, and muſt be wrong under all Circumſtances of which we can judge; yet it does not follow, that therefore it was wrong under a Theocracy, or under the Circumſtances of the *Iſraelites* when thatLaw was given. This is the Sum of his whole Argument under this Head. But the Reaſon againſt Perſecution for Conſcience ſake, or eſtabliſhing Religion by outward Force and Violence, does not at all depend upon different and variable Circumſtances of Perſons and Things, which might make ſome Things right and reaſonable at one Time that would not be ſo at another. The Argument here depends on the eternal immutable Reaſon and Fitneſs of Things, the moral Perfections of God, and the Nature of Religion itſelf. To force Religion itſelf upon Conſcience and inward Judgment is impoſſible in the Nature of the Thing, and to force the outward Practice againſt Conſcience and inward Judgment is tyrannical, unjuſt, and contrary to the Nature and Perfections of God; this therefore muſt be eternally and in all Caſes wrong, and as much ſo in *Moſes* as in the *Pope*, or any other

other Perſecutors at this Time; and if he can juſtify it in one, why not in the other, ſince the ſame *divine Authority* is pleaded for it now as then. But to ſay that the Thing might be right then, and to that People, though not at other Times, or to any other People for the *Reaſons given*, when he had given *no Reaſons*, and could give none, is a mere Evaſion, and ſuch as could come from none but a *Maſter of Arts*. He all along ſuppoſes this Law to have been of *poſitive divine Authority*, which is the very Thing in Queſtion, and what he ought to have proved a little otherwiſe than he has done. But this Writer could prove any Thing in the World, if you would but grant his Suppoſitions, and not diſpute with him at all.

The Author, *page* 133, ſays, "It is hard to "conceive upon what Grounds this Writer "could aſſert as he does, that *Moſes* was very "confident that his People ſhould have it in "their Power to extend their conquering Arms, "not only in *Canaan*, but over all the reſt of the "World." This Author ſeems to be moſt at a Loſs where there is leaſt Reaſon for it. I ſuppoſe he will grant me, that when *Moſes* undertook the Conqueſt of *Canaan*, he was very confident that God would bleſs and ſucceed him in it, or fully perſuaded that he was taking the right Way of fulfilling the *Abrahamic* Covenant and Promiſe, of making his People a Bleſſing to all Nations, or the Means of propagating the Knowledge and Worſhip of the true God throughout the Earth. Had he not been

very

very confident of this, he would never have run ſo great a Riſk, or taken any ſuch Method. After he had taken Poſſeſſion of a Country by Fire and Sword, and given a Law which muſt neceſſarily eſtabliſh and perpetuate an Enmity and State of War with all other Nations, he could have no other poſſible Way of ſpreading Religion but by Force of Arms, for the Nature of the Conqueſt muſt neceſſarily, and in the Courſe of Things, exaſperate the neighbouring Nations, and arm all their Paſſions againſt ſuch bloody Robbers and Plunderers; but he was fully perſwaded, that if his People kept to his Law, God would enable them to conquer all their Enemies, which muſt have been the whole World, ſo far as their Name had ſpread. But the Hopes and Confidence of *Moſes* all came to nothing, after 40 Years Experience of the incurable Blindneſs and Obduracy of the People; and indeed he could have had no reaſonable Ground to expect Succeſs at firſt, in the Way he took to accompliſh the Promiſe made to *Abraham*, ſince the very Method which he took to bring it about, was a Violation of that Covenant of Peace and Righteouſneſs, and aſcribing the Want of Succeſs afterward to the Peoples not obeying or keeping cloſe enough to that rigorous burdenſome Law, which muſt have been worſe than the *Egyptian* Bondage itſelf, was a *mere Blind*, and has been always made Uſe of to cover over and diſguiſe an unjuſtifiable Attempt, contrary to all the Laws of Nature and Nations; and equally contrary

to

to the Nature and Conditions of the *Abrahamic* Covenant and Promiſe, or the Law of Truth, Peace, and Righteouſneſs. Had the People kept to this, they could have had no Need of ſo rigorous a Law, or ſo bloody and unſucceſsful a War. It does not appear that they ever fell into Idolatry in the Wilderneſs, after the firſt Inſtance of the golden Calf, and they continued after this to worſhip the true God during the Lives of *Joſhua* and the Elders, which could not be leſs than 40 Years more, and yet they could not conquer the Country. The Pretence therefore that God puniſhed them only for their Idolatry, was vain and ill-grounded: But the original Cry of Blood and Murder ſtill followed them throughout all their Generations, and kept them almoſt continually immerſed in Blood, till at length they were utterly extirpated and diſperſed, and made the Scorn and By-Word of the whole World. Such an Example has Providence made of a Nation that pretended to fulfil a Covenant or Promiſe of Truth, Peace, and Righteouſneſs, by the moſt unexempled Inhumanity, Violence, and Rapine; and aſcribing all this to a poſitive divine Authority, is reverſing the Law of Nature, and impeaching all the divine Perfections only to juſtify Theft and Perjury, Robbery and Murder. How all ſuch Things may be aſcribed to God, as bringing them about, and permitting them in the Courſe of his Providence, is viſible enough; but aſcribing them to a *poſitive Will*, is deſtroying and ſetting aſide all the Boundaries

and natural Diſtinction between Good and Evil, Right and Wrong. But moſt unhappy beyond all Expreſſion would be the Lot of Mankind, if God had left them no common Rule or Meaſure of Truth and Falſehood, Good and Evil, independent of the Claims and Pretenſions of Enthuſiaſm and Impoſture. But this Author, amidſt all his Divinity and School-learning, does not ſeem to have Diſcernment enough, to ſee how the *Hebrew* Hiſtorians generally aſcribe Things to God, in a Senſe very different from what we ſhould now. In a Multitude of Inſtances they ſeem to ſpeak of a *poſitive Will*, where it is evident that nothing more could be meant by it than Permiſſion; and ſuch was the Temper of the People, that they could receive nothing as from God, but under ſome Appearance or other of *poſitive Authority*.

There are Inſtances enough of this, which a Man of his Underſtanding and Knowledge in the Scriptures cannot be ignorant of. But whatever they might do formerly, we muſt diſtinguiſh now between Permiſſion and Commiſſion, with Regard to God and Providence; though I think he has here left himſelf no Rule or Criterion of Judgment in this Caſe; and though he would ſcarce admit of ſuch Confuſion in any other Inſtance, yet he thinks he muſt admit it here with Regard to the *divine Authority* of the *Moſaic Diſpenſation*. In ſhort, I deny that ever God had promiſed *Abraham* or his Seed the Poſſeſſion of the Land by *Conqueſt*, or in a Way of Violence and Bloodſhed.

ſhed. This I think I have proved, and if I had ſaid no more, this is a ſufficient Anſwer to the Author's Argument in this Chapter, concerning the poſitive divine Authority of *Moſes*.

But the Author in his next or fifth Chapter goes farther, and endeavours to clear this Law from ſome Imputations, which I thought lay very hard upon it, as a Matter of immediate poſitive divine Inſtitution. And I hope this Writer will here keep to Scripture-Authority, and not try to work off or evade any Thing that may be plainly proved from thence; and if ſome Things ſhould appear ſhocking to him in our preſent Notions and Apprehenſions of Things, he has an Anſwer ready, That however ſtrange or unreaſonable thoſe Things might be thought now, they were yet wiſe, reaſonable, and fit, at that Time, and under ſuch Circumſtances.

I had clearly proved, and beyond the Poſſibility of any fair Anſwer, that human Sacrifices were *indulged* and allowed, though not *enjoined*, by the Law of *Moſes*, and that they were ſuppoſed and included among the ſeveral other Caſes of *Vows* or *Free-will* Offerings. The Author, I preſume, ſaw, that granting this would be giving up the immediate divine Authority of that Law; but the Manner in which he tries to get off with it, is ſo ſhamefully evaſive, that it plainly ſhews him to have been ſtruggling with his own Convictions. He pretends, that the Perſons or Things to be given up and devoted to God in Sacrifice, by a ſpecial or ab-

ſolute Vow and Free-will-offering, as *Levit.* xxvii. 29. were devoted and given up to him as a *Curſe*, or in a Way of Vengeance, as the *Canaanites* were. But can any Thing be more abſurd or contradictory than this? Any Thing accurſed or unclean could not poſſibly be offered or accepted in Sacrifice, nor could they devote or dedicate any Thing as a Vow or Free-will-offering, which the Law had made due before. Things offered in this Way muſt be a Man's own Property, and at his own Diſpoſal, without any prior Right or Claim againſt him. As to the Word *Cherem* which he cavils about, it is plain, that from the Uſe of it in Scripture, it ſignifies any Thing in general that is to be utterly deſtroyed without any Redemption or Retrieve, whether as a Curſe, and in a Way of Wrath and Vengeance, or by Sacrifice and Offering to the Lord. And will this Author ſay that *Jephtha*'s Daughter was doomed to Deſtruction like the *Canaanites*, or that her Father vowed her to the Lord as a Curſe? But whether *Jephtha* really did ſacrifice his Daughter or not, the Author ſays *has been a Queſtion among the moſt learned Critics, both among the* Jews *and Chriſtians, and is ſtill like to be ſo.* That is, they have doubted whether this Story, as the Scripture relates it, is true or not, or whether the Hiſtorian has here given us the real Matter of Fact; for they could have no other real Ground or Cauſe of doubting. *But let us ſuppoſe*, ſays he, *that* Jephtha *did ſacrifice his Daughter, it only follows that he did wrong in-*

in it, through a miſtaken Zeal and Scrupuloſity: Since, as I have proved, the Law of Moſes *no where allowed human Sacrifices.* But no ſuch Thing will follow that this was done by a miſtaken Zeal in *Jephtha*, nor has he at all proved that this Law did not allow of human Sacrifices. I have given him an expreſs Statute of that Law, where ſuch Sacrifices are allowed as Vows or Free-will-offerings, and ſhewn the Weakneſs and Inſufficiency of that poor Cavil or Criticiſm, by which he endeavoured to elude it. That there were no more Inſtances of this afterwards, or none left upon Record, is no great Wonder, ſince *Jephtha*'s Raſhneſs in making ſuch a Vow, and thereby laying himſelf under ſuch a Neceſſity of Law, was never approved of, and the whole Nation, or Tribe at leaſt, afterwards kept an annual Mourning for it, which plainly ſhews that the Execution of this Vow was from a Neceſſity not to be diſpenſed with, when the Vow had been once made. As to the Paſſages he has referred to, where God abſolutely forbad this People to worſhip and offer Sacrifices to him after the Manner of the Heathens, they conclude nothing at all. For I believe it would be hard to find any Sort or Kind of Sacrifices in Uſe among the Heathens, that *Moſes* did not adopt into his own Scheme of Superſtition, only they were not to be offered in the ſame Places, nor to the ſame Gods. But there was nothing ſo dear and valuable which the Heathens might offer to their falſe

Gods, but the *Iſraelites* might offer to their own true God.

But how ſhocking ſoever theſe Things may appear, when conſidered as the Worſhip of the true God, the eternal infinite Creator himſelf, yet they will not appear ſo very ſurprizing, when they are taken only as a Worſhip paid to the local, oracular, and tutelar God of *Iſrael*, as diſtinguiſhed from the like local, tutelar Gods of other Nations. That this groſsly ignorant and moſt ſtupidPeople had ſuch aGod, under the ſame Notion with the HeathenGods, is indiſputably clear through the whole Story; and accordingly they worſhipped him in the ſame ſuperſtitious Way, and with the ſame Sort of external, uſeleſs, and ſenſeleſs Ceremonies; and therefore the popular Religion which *Moſes* contrived for the common Herd, who were capable of no better, was but a more refined Scheme of Superſtition, which might ſerve to keep them from the groſſer Idolatry of the *Egyptians*, and other Nations, till the Time might come in which they ſhould be brought to a more rational and ſpiritual Worſhip, ſuitable to the Nature and Perfections of the infinite eternal Creator. It is plain, that while this People had ſuch a local tutelar God of their own, they were almoſt continually revolting to the Worſhip of other Gods, who by giving their Worſhippers better Succeſs in War, often happened to be too hard for their own God. But when this Idol of theirs had been burnt by the *Babylonians* in his own Temple, the

the People having loſt their own, never afterwards received or worſhipped the tutelar Gods of other Nations, but in all Times to come kept themſelves free from that Sort of Superſtition and Idolatry. The Nations round about could not but conceive of the local, tutelar God of *Iſrael* under the ſame Notion which they did of their *own*, and muſt think him the moſt cruel, vengeful, and implacable of all other Gods, who would ſet his Worſhippers and Votaries on a Work ſo abhorrent to Nature, and ſo contrary to all Right and Reaſon; and this muſt give them the utmoſt Abhorrence and Deteſtation both of this People and their God. All this in its natural and juſt Conſequences has been verified in Fact, and the Courſe of God's Providence, as the Hiſtory of that People abundantly proves. But thus much for the local, tutelar God, or popular Idol of *Iſrael*, that I am ſure could not be the true God, who can be worſhipped only by a *rational Service in Spirit and in Truth*, and who only *ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him*.

But I muſt now again return to the Author where I left him. I had obſerved, *Mor. Philoſ. p.* 137, 138. that God's claiming all the Firſt-born of *Iſrael* as *holy to himſelf*, both of Man and Beaſt, was a plain Proof of his Right to both, and muſt lay an equal Obligation to one as much as the other; for ſurely a poſitive, abſolute Claim from God muſt not only prove a *Right*, but lay an *Obligation*, or create a *Law*, as long as it ſubſiſts. But this *Right* and con-

ſequent *Obligation*, with regard to the human Kind, was not inſiſted on, or put in Execution, with reſpect to the human Kind, but remitted and excuſed on the reaſonable Conſideration that God would accept the Firſt-born of the Tribe of *Levi* to ſerve at the Tabernacle, and to be diſtinguiſhed by particular Marks of Honour there, and this to exempt the Firſt-born of the other Tribes from the Honour and Happineſs of being ſacrificed. This is the Repreſentation which I had given of the Matter, and which one would think ſhould be plain Senſe, and intelligible enough, as I am ſure, it is a true and faithful Repreſentation, ſo far as I can ſee or underſtand it. But the Reader ſhall now ſee what this Author makes of it, and how he treats me upon it. And I ſhall here quote him out, that no Miſtakes or Cavils may ariſe about it.

"The Argument he endeavours to bring from "the Law for redeeming the Firſt-born, may be "turned againſt him, and proves the very con- "trary of what he produces it for. Since when "God challenges the Firſt-born of Man and "Beaſt to himſelf, in Memorial of his ſlaying "the Firſt-born of the *Egyptians*, and ſparing "the *Iſraelites*, which was a wiſe Conſtitution, "aptly contrived to keep up a conſtant Memorial "of this moſt extraordinary Event, and conſe- "quently of their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, the "Remembrance of which was of high Impor- "tance to preſerve throughout all their Genera- "tions; I ſay, when he made this Conſtitution,

" or commanded the First-born among clean " Beasts to be sacrificed; but with regard to the " First-born among unclean Beasts, which were " forbidden in the Law to be sacrificed, and all " the First-born among Men, they were expres- " ly commanded to redeem them; a manifest " Proof, that as he would not have unclean " Beasts to be sacrificed, so neither would he " have *any human Sacrifices to be offered to him.* " This is the plain original Law relating to that " Matter, *Exod.* xiii. 13, 18. yet this Writer has " the Confidence to tell us, that this Law con- " cerns the Redemption of the First-born, which " he calls a *severe Law*, whereby were *enjoined* " *such terrible Things in Righteousness*; laid them " under an Obligation to sacrifice their First-born " Children unto God. He is pleased indeed to " allow that this Law *was afterwards very much* " *mitigated, or rather repealed*, viz. *upon God's* " *accepting all the Males of* Levi *for the First-* " *born Males of all, as a Ransom or Redemption* " *of their Lives.* And if we would know " how far that severe Law was mitigated " or repealed, he informs us that it con- " sisted in this, *that God hereby removed* " *the legal Obligation of human Sacrifices,* " *and left it to the free Choice and volun-* " *tary Oblation of the People, whether their* " *Burnt-Offerings of this Kind should be Male* " *or Female, and whether it should be the First-* " *born or not.* So that he supposes, that be- " fore the *Levites* were taken in instead of the " First-born, the *Israelites* were under a legal

" Obligation

" Obligation to offer up all their Firſt-born " Male Children as Sacrifices or Burnt-Offer- " ings to the Lord; and that afterward they " had the Favour done them to leave it to " their *Choice*, not whether they ſhould of- " fer up *any of their Children at all*, but to " offer up either Males or Females, or any " other of their Children, whether of the Firſt- " born or not." I have given all this as a Specimen of the Author's Skill and Dexterity in Argument, but I believe there never was ſuch an Interpreter or Commentator before. It is plain, that I had ſuppoſed an immediate Obligation to ariſe from God's Claim of Right and Declaration of his Will, concerning their offering up all their Firſt-born of both Man and Beaſt, antecedent to the Mitigation or Remitment of this Obligation afterwards, by God's accepting the *Levitical* Males for the Firſt-born of all the other Tribes. But after this gracious Mitigation of the firſt Demand, the People were left at Liberty whether they would offer any Sacrifices of the human Kind or not, and if they did, it might be any Child, Son or Daughter, without any Regard to a Firſt-born. But this candid Writer makes me ſay, That after the Mitigation of, or diſpenſing with, that firſt Law, or rigorous Demand of the Firſt-born of Man as well as Beaſt, it was left to their *Choice*, not whether they would offer any *human Sacrifices* or no, but whether it ſhould be the *Firſt-born* or *any other Child*. But does this Man believe a God or a Judgment to come?

come? I am ſure, if he cannot here bluſh for himſelf, all his Friends muſt bluſh for him. Is it poſſible that it ſhould be left to their Choice whether they would offer any *human Sacrifice* at all or not, and yet only left to their Choice whether it ſhould be a *Firſt-born* or not? Thus has this Writer's Zeal tranſported him beyond all the Bounds of Truth, Reaſon, or Conſcience. And while he is maintaining the fundamental Principles of all Impoſture, Superſtition, and Idolatry, he bleſſes himſelf in his Heart, as doing God and Religion good Service, and means nothing by divine *Authority*, but Truth without Reaſon, or religious Obligations without any rational Light or Evidence to the Underſtanding, but a blind implicit Submiſſion to Authority.

But to return to the Argument; the great Queſtion here is, in what Senſe the Firſt-born Males of *Iſrael* had been reſerved as *holy to the Lord*, and what the Redemption or Deliverance from this *State of Holineſs* was, to which they were afterwards intitled? Whatever this was, it muſt plainly have been by two different Laws, Conſtitutions, or Deſignations, in which the one was reverſed or ſet aſide to make Way for the other; and yet this Author moſt abſurdly ſuppoſes and aſſerts, that both theſe were one and the ſame Conſtitution or Deſignation, and that there was no Alteration, Reverſement, or Repeal, in the Caſe. It is plain, that this Redemption and Right, or Grant of it, was looked upon as a very high Favour, or a Deliverance from ſome great

great Evil; and therefore if the *Levites* had been put into the ſame State from which the others had been delivered, they muſt have been puniſhed in the others Stead, and the Family of the two Brothers muſt have ſuffered for the Pleaſure and Happineſs of the other Tribes. But this looks a little unlikely, and therefore it is highly probable it could not have been the Caſe, what the Phraſe of reſerving as *holy to the Lord* ſignifies, with Regard to the Firſt-born Males among the clean Beaſts, is very evident, and there is not the leaſt Ground or Reaſon to think that it muſt not ſignify the ſame in both Caſes, and that the Firſt-born Males of the human and brutal Kind had at firſt been reſerved and ſet apart as *holy to the Lord* in the ſame Senſe. And this is the more evident, becauſe when the *Levitical* Males come to be ſubſtituted for the Firſt-born of the other Tribes, the Expreſſion is quite altered, and it is not ſaid they ſhall be *holy to the Lord*, as the others were before, but *they ſhall be mine*, *i. e.* my chief Servants or peculiar Favourites, to wear my Livery and miniſter in my Court, to eat at my Table, to be exempted from all other Buſineſs, Care, and Toil, and to live in Eaſe and Idleneſs, Pleaſure and Luxury, on the Fruits of the Sweat and Labour of the whole People beſides. This was really the Caſe of the *Levites*, and this muſt have been the Miſery, Death, or Slavery, from which the Firſt-born had been redeemed and delivered, had there been ſuch Exchange and Subſtitution as

ſome

ſome Schematiſts imagine. But the bare repreſenting ſuch an Hypotheſis is enough to expoſe it, and turn it into Ridicule, ſince, if this had been all that was meant by it, it is plain that this could have been no Senſe at all.

But there is another Way of explaining this Matter, and making it as clear as Day-light upon the Principles of *human Policy*, though not of *School-Divinity*. And therefore ſince the Divines are ſo much at a Loſs about it, why may not I attempt another Way? It is plain then from the frequent Murmurings and Diſcontents of the People, and their charging *Moſes* and *Aaron* with taking too much upon them, that the main Point which *Moſes* as a Politician had to gain with them was, how to ſettle the Government or Prieſthood in the Tribe of *Levi*, and thereby ſecure it to his own Family; and conſidering the turbulent Temper of the People, this required ſome Management and Contrivance; and therefore *Moſes* having Credit and Influence enough with them, he muſt procure an immediate poſitive Law from God to reſerve their Firſt-born both of Man and Beaſt as holy to the Lord in the ſacrificial Senſe. This was a moſt ſevere Law, but yet God, had not made it ſo abſolute, but it might be diſpenſed with in Regard to the human Kind, if the Prieſthood was ſettled in the Tribe of *Levi*, or in the Family of *Moſes* and *Aaron*; and then God was ready to take all the Males of that Tribe in lieu of the Firſt-born Males of the other Tribes, whoſe Lives were other-

otherwiſe all forfeited, and reſerved to a more ſacred Uſe. It is eaſy to conceive how this muſt take with them, and how readily and joyfully they would comply with ſuch a Law, and become the Servants and Tributaries of that Tribe for ever, to ſave the Lives of their Firſt-born. Such a Law muſt for ever deter them from invading the Office, Privilege, and Prerogative of the *Levites*. I do not ſay this was really the Caſe, but ſuppoſing it ſo, it would give a clearer and more ſatisfactory Account of the Matter than any of our ſyſtematical Divines have yet done. And this I am ſure of, that our Author's Way of ſeeming to contemn all Arguments which he cannot anſwer, and throwing them off as not worth anſwering, is perfectly ſhameleſs, and if he can find no better Arguments than he has muſtered up already, I am willing to leave this Matter juſt where it now ſtands.

He next comes to the Caſe of *Abraham*'s offering up his Son, and the Heir of the Promiſe, at the ſuppoſed Command of God. In which, as in all other Inſtances, he makes as light of me as if I was not worthy to be his *Lamp-Boy* or *Shoe-Cleaner*, and this perhaps may be true enough; but yet I hope the candid Reader will not deſpiſe my Arguments ever the more for it.

He dwells long upon this Caſe of *Abraham*, and ſpends above 20 Pages about it, and at laſt leaves it juſt as he found it, or altogether improbable and incredible. I had urged, that

as the Matter of this Command is contrary to the Law of Nature, to the Moral Perfections of God, and to all the Affections, Paſſions, and Sentiments which God himſelf has implanted in human Nature, it muſt be unreaſonable and incredible in itſelf, and in the Nature and Reaſon of Things. And this rational Evidence to the Underſtanding being vaſtly ſuperior and prior to any hiſtorical Proof, no ſuch lower Proof from Teſtimony can ſet it aſide. This is my Argument, that the Thing itſelf is of ſuch a Nature, as not to be capable of Proof by any hiſtorical Evidence or Teſtimony. This Writer continually throughout his whole Harangue goes upon If's and May-bee's; but I am not diſputing againſt Poſſibilities, but only conſidering where the Probability or ſuperior Evidence lies, and upon this Foot I am willing to reſt the whole Matter as it now ſtands, after what has been ſaid on both Sides.

It may be ſuppoſed indeed, that in the ſhort imperfect Account of this Affair, that we have tranſmitted to us, there may have been ſome original Circumſtances relating to it left out, which might have cleared up the whole Matter, and rendered the Story very reaſonable and credible. As *Abraham* and his Family were then the only Worſhippers of the true God, the People of the Land and Country about might thus urge or preſs him, that if his God was the only true God, or the one Creator and Diſpoſer of all Things, he ſhould ſacrifice his only Son and Heir, and then if his

God

God would raiſe him from the Dead, put him into the ſame State of Life and Action as before, and fulfil his Promiſes in him, they would all believe in and worſhip the God of *Abraham*, and be of his Religion; and *Abraham* upon this might have a ſtrong indubitable Perſwaſion and Impreſſion upon his Mind, that God would give them this Conviction, and that this over-bearing Faith or Perſwaſion of his muſt come from God. But if this was the Caſe, the Event proved the contrary, and that God did not intend to propagate the true Religion and Worſhip in ſuch a miraculous Way; or if there muſt be ſome viſible Appearance and audible Voice in the Caſe, ſuppoſe an Angel had appeared to *Abraham*, and told him, that if he would ſacrifice his Son, and burn him to Aſhes, God would bring him into Life again, and make good all his Promiſes to him, this might have been ſufficient to put *Abraham* upon the Work, without any of the otherwiſe ſhocking Circumſtances to human Nature; but which Way ſoever this Caſe is put, it muſt be plain that the Thing did not come immediately from God, and *Abraham*'s Perſwaſion in this Caſe was not well grounded; however, it ſerved to ſhew the Strength and Invincibility of *Abraham*'s Faith and Truſt in God, and that he was ready to do any Thing, or part with any Thing, at his Command. But then that God himſelf ſhould command this to try what *Abraham* would do in ſuch a Caſe, as if God did not know as well

well without it, is the moſt abſurd and ridiculous Suppoſition in the World.

The Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, to whom this Writer refers, without any authentic Authority, as St *Paul*, ſeems to place this Caſe of *Abraham* upon the very ſame Foot; and *Abraham* conſidered or reaſoned with himſelf, or was fully convinced and perſwaded in his own Mind, that if he ſhould ſacrifice his Son, God would certainly raiſe him again from the Dead, and make good his Promiſes in him after all. But it is certain that God had never intended or promiſed any ſuch Thing; and therefore *Abraham*'s Faith here, however ſtrong and overbearing, was yet preſumptive, or an irrational enthuſiaſtic Perſwaſion, which God himſelf could never have been the Author of; and if he was miſtaken in this, he might be in other Caſes too, where he depended on any immediate Revelation or Communication from God, above and beyond the rational Evidence or Appearance of Things to his Underſtanding. And as to the 400 Years of ſojourning, at the End of which they were to be put into the quiet peaceable Poſſeſſion of the Land for ever, or throughout all their Generations, whether it be regarded as a Prophecy or Promiſe, it was plainly never fulfilled. If we take it as a Prophecy, therefore it muſt have been a falſe Prophecy; and if it is conſidered as a conditional Promiſe, thoſe Conditions having been never complied with, it could not

be accompliſhed; and had that People ſtaid in *Egypt* till they could have been delivered in God's *own Way*, or upon the Terms of *the Abrahamic Covenant*, they muſt have been there ſtill.

But it ſeems plain from the Account we have of the Matter, that *Abraham* had a very ſtrong Perſwaſion, however he came by it, that the Sacrifice of an only Son would be ſo acceptable to God, as to induce him to work the moſt ſtupendous Miracle, as the Reward of ſuch high Devotion, and as a Teſtimony of his Approbation. And Dr *Hyde de Relig. Vet. Perſar.* informs us, That this Caſe of *Abraham* was the Original or firſt Occaſion of human Sacrifices all over the Eaſt; and if that was ſo, this Miſtake of *Abraham*'s was very fatal to Mankind, and he proved, in the Event, a greater Corrupter than Reformer of the World. But if *Abraham* himſelf carried this Matter too far, and ſuffered his Imagination and Strength of Perſwaſion about Revelation and immediate Communications from God, ſometimes to tranſport him beyond the Bounds of Reaſon and Truth, this ought to caution all our modern Schematiſts not to puſh ſuch a Principle of Error and Deception ſtill farther, by abuſing and miſrepreſenting others under the odious Names of *Deiſts*, *Free-Thinkers*, *Infidels*, *Enemies to Chriſtianity*, &c. only becauſe they cannot give into the ſame Enthuſiaſtic Scheme, but require plain Reaſon and conſiſtent

conſiſtent Senſe for what they believe. And could this learned Writer be but prevailed on to drop his Scheme, or not to trouble the World farther with it, till he ſhould be able to produce any ſuch rational Evidence for it, I am verily perſwaded that we ſhould never hear any Thing more from him.

SECT. V.

The ſupreme Power, according to the Conſtitution of Moſes, *lodged in the High-Prieſt, to whom the ultimate Appeal in Judgment was made, proved, againſt the Author's Exceptions and Evaſions. The Oracle was the Prieſt; and the local, oracular, or tutelar God of* Iſrael, *who was a Friend to that Country, and an Enemy to all other Nations, could not be the true God. That the Revenues of the Prieſthood in* Egypt *amount to at leaſt an annual Rent upon all the Lands proved, and conſequently that this muſt have been an unjuſt and tyrannical Conſtitution by the Author's own Conceſſions. The Pride and Vanity of this Nation in imagining that all Truth and Righteouſneſs muſt be derived from them to other Nations, perfectly enthuſiaſtic and groundleſs. No other Nation ever received the Worſhip of the true God upon the Motives of a* Reſurrection, *and a* future State *from this* Nation; *but, on the contrary, the* Jews *themſelves received theſe Doctrines and future Sanctions from the* Perſians, *after the Riſe of that Monarchy.*

THUS far I think I have fairly ſet aſide all this Author's Pretenſions to Revelation above Reaſon, or to any Religion different from

from the eternal, immutable Religion of God and Nature, or that eternal, immutable Truth and Righteouſneſs by which *Abraham*, *Noah*, *Enoch*, and all good Men from the beginning of the World had been juſtified and accepted of God, and which *Chriſt* came to reſtore, confirm, and propagate farther in the World. But we are now to enter upon the Buſineſs of the legal Prieſthood and Sacrifices, and to enquire into the Nature, Grounds, and Reaſons of it, and of what Uſe or Service it has been, or could be, to true Religion. And here as the Author has been indiſputably tedious enough, I wiſh I could have found more Argument in proportion to the length of his Harangues.

This Author, *pag.* 179. denies the ſupreme Power in this Nation to have been in the High-Prieſt, and the Reaſon he gives for it is, that the Government was in the Hands of Judges, and the great Council or Sanhedrim, by the Law of *Moſes*; and that at laſt their Kings could depoſe a High-Prieſt, and do what they thought fit. But ſurely he could not think that I ſuppoſed the Execution of the whole Government to be in the Prieſts, for the Truth is, that they were intirely exempted from all the Burden, Expence, or Hazard of Government; they paid no Taxes, but received all the Revenues of the Nation, they could not be obliged to civil Offices, nor to bear Arms, they were only Lords and Judges, and not common Subjects, and that the ſupreme Power was in the High-Prieſt, and the ultimate Appeal in Judg-

ment to him, by the Conſtitution of *Moſes*, is ſo very evident, that this Writer could not deny it; but when they came to chuſe a King, and put themſelves under the regal Power after the Manner of other Nations, this was a fundamental Breach of the Conſtitution, and they were now no longer a Theocracy, as the Prophet told them, the God of *Iſrael* was now no longer the King of *Iſrael*, but they had depoſed and dethroned their God, and made another King. It could now in Time to come be to no Purpoſe to conſult the *Oracle*, or to aſk Counſel of *God*, when the *High-Prieſt* himſelf was become a Subject, and the King would do what he pleaſed.

And this lets one into the whole Myſtery, and ſhews wherein the Impoſture or Cheat lay of God's being their King. It is very evident through the whole Story, that this People had a local, oracular, and tutelar God, who is called the God of *Iſrael*, as diſtinguiſhed from the like reſidential Gods of *Egypt*, *Philiſtia*, *Zidon*, and other Nations; they had a God that reſided in the Sanctuary, and ſat in Judgment upon the Mercy-Seat, from whence they could hear his Voice, though they were not to ſee his Face, nor ſo much as to form in their Imaginations any Idea or Reſemblance of him. This God after he had been dethroned and depoſed as King, had a Houſe built for him, where he dwelt 450 Years without being ever conſulted or adviſed with, and then was burnt in his own Palace by the idolatrous *Babylonians*. This was

the God for whom the Prieſthood was inſtituted, to whom the Sacrifices were offered, and who was to be appeaſed and pacified with the Blood of Beaſts; but to ſuppoſe and affirm all, or any Thing of this of the true God, muſt be equally abſurd and blaſphemous. It is very plain to me, that *Moſes* only refined upon the Superſtition of *Egypt* and other Nations, he took them off from the groſs Idolatry of Image-Worſhip, and brought them to the Notion of the Unity, Spirituality, and Inviſibility of the true God; but then his making the true God only the reſidential, tutelar God of that Country, and his inſtituting a Prieſthood and Sacrifices to him in Imitation of the Heathens, is a plain Proof that he could not entirely bring them off from their old Superſtition and Idolatry. And as he could not do this, he made the beſt of it, took an Occaſion from it to ſettle the Government, with a vaſt Revenue, in his own Tribe and Family; and this was ſurely making the beſt of a bad Matter.

This Writer's Pretence that I had aſſerted, that the *Levites* were exempted by Law from the common Juriſdiction of the Law, and what he ſays upon it, *pag.* 180—182, is nothing but Forgery and Abuſe; the meaneſt of them had greater legal Privileges than even the Princes of the other Tribes, ſuch as I have mentioned above; and as to the common Juriſdiction of the Law in criminal Caſes, they might eaſily evade it, conſidering the ſpecial Favour they muſt always have at Court, which

was entirely *Levitical*, and that they had been, by the very Conſtitution, placed and diſperſed about as Spies and Informers all over the Kingdom; ſo that a Man had better have forgiven Murder than affront a *Levite*. *Pag.* 182. this admirable Writer has a very extraordinary Paragraph which I ſhall tranſcribe, to let the Reader ſee his uncommon *Talents*.

" As to their Church-Revenues, if he could " prove, as he ſays, he eaſily could, *That they* " *had full twenty Shillings in the Pound upon* " *all the Lands of Iſrael*, he might juſtly ſay, " *that they drained all the Treaſures of the* " *Kingdom into the Church*; but a wild Aſſer- " tion as this deſerves no Anſwer, and only " ſhews that this Writer throws out any Thing " at random, by which he may vent his " Spleen againſt the Prieſts, without being at " all ſollicitous whether it be agreeable to Truth " or Decency." One may ſee by this, that the Author never rented an Eſtate himſelf and paid the Rent. But why may not a whole Nation of Tenants live at a rack Rent, as well as ſo great a Part of this and other Nations do now? Every rented Eſtate in Land ought to make three annual Rents, or otherwiſe the Tenant could not live and maintain a Family out of it, after he has defraid all the Charge and Expence of Tillage, and paid his Rent; but this vaſt Revenue to the Prieſts was moſtly ſqueezed out of the Sweat and Labour of the Poor; and ſince this Author has made ſo fair a Conceſſion, I ſhall attempt for once to prove

that it could not amount by Law to leſs than an annual Rent upon the Lands, beſides what the Prieſts and Levites might extort by the Power and Privileges granted them.

In the firſt Place then, the Prieſthood had a Tenth of all the original natural Produce of the Soil, in Corn, Wine, Oil, Fruits, *&c.* before the Reſidue could be put to any other Uſe for Man or Beaſt; and as this Tenth was neat, and free from Labour and Expence in Cultivation and Tillage, it muſt have been at leaſt three Tenths of the annual Rent of the Land; and all this muſt be taken in Kind, and without any Compoſition of a *Modus*, which is now very common with us. After this had been taken away, the Prieſthood had a Tenth of all the Beaſts, clean or unclean, and the Firſt-born of all Beaſts, which I ſhall put as a Tenth more; though it might be eaſily proved that this muſt have much exceeded a Tenth, but I ſhall reckon them both as two Tenths or a Fifth. Now ſince the Stock upon a landed Eſtate muſt, upon an Average, amount to at leaſt two annual Rents, a fifth of this will be two Fifths or four Tenths of the annual Rent, which with the other three make ſeven Tenths; beſides this the Tribe of *Levi* had a very conſiderable Share of the Cities, Towns, Villages, and Lands themſelves, which by computing from the Places given and allotted to them by Law, would ſeem to amount to a ſeventh Part at leaſt of the whole Country, but I ſhall put it only at a Tenth; and this, with what has been

been computed before, will make eight Tenths of annual Rent; beſides this, the ſtated legal Fees upon ſeveral Occaſions were very extraordinary; as for a Woman after lying-in, and when ſhe came to be churched, for Perſons that had been cured of any foul Diſeaſe, and many other Inſtances, too long to be enumerated here; and in any ſuch Caſes, if a Lamb of a Year old had been ordered, and the Perſon could not give it, or was not worth it, they muſt give a Couple of Turtles, two young Pigeons, a tenth-deal of Flower, or what they could, if ever ſo little; ſo that if a Man was poor, the Prieſt would take all, and could have no more; but then the occaſional Fines for legal accidental Uncleanneſſes, which might be unavoidable, and almoſt innumerable, can be reduced to no certain Calculation at all, eſpecially as the *Levites* had been ſo commodiouſly ſituated and diſperſed all over the Country, and mixed with every Tribe to obſerve and give in their Informations in all ſuch Caſes, which muſt have put it in their Power to have ruined any Family that had not entertained and treated them well: But beſides all theſe Dues and Fines to be paid in Kind, there was a very great and enormous Poll-Tax laid upon the whole Nation, and to be paid in Money; every Male from 20 to 60 was to pay half a Shekel three Times a Year, when they went up to the Sanctuary; and here the pooreſt Man was rated as high as the richeſt, and no Abatement to be made on Account of Circumſtances;

cumſtances; at the ſame Time no Man was to appear before the *Lord*, the *Prieſt*, empty handed, but every one was to bring his Offering or Preſent with him, which, beſides the loſs of Time and Hinderance of Labour, could not amount to much leſs than what was to be paid in Money.

The Weight of a Shekel in Silver was not much more than half an Ounce Troy, or about two Shillings and Eight-pence of our Money, but the real Value of it cannot be eſtimated, without conſidering the Proportion of Money at that Time to other Things, which muſt be purchaſed with it, or exchanged for it; for every Body knows that Money itſelf is a Commodity, and may riſe and fall at any Rate with Reſpect to other Things which are intrinſically neceſſary. Two Shekels was the Price fixed by the Law for the beſt fat ſacrificial Sheep, 50 Shekels for a Man-ſlave, and 30 for a Woman, *Lev.* xxvii. and from many other Inſtances, which might be produced, the proportioned Value of the Shekel could not be leſs than 10 or 12 Shillings our Money, and I put it at 10. Now the Number of the People as taken by *Joab* in *David*'s Time, did not amount to quite 160000, becauſe the Tribe of *Benjamin* were not numbered, and *Joab* had no great Mind to go ſo far as he did, but the King would have it ſo. I ſhall therefore take the Number upon the whole as 160000, each of which paying half a Shekel three Times a Year, or a Shekel and half

within

within the Year, would amount to 2400000 Shekels, 1200000 Pounds of our Money, at the present Rate and Value of Money, which is half as much again as our present Civil List; and including all the Presents and Offerings that must be brought at the same Time, it could not amount to less than two Millions Sterling, an immense Sum, besides all the rest, for a Country to pay that was never at the utmost, and in *David*'s Time, above a fourth Part so big as *England*. And now I may leave any one to judge, whether all this put together, must not amount to much more than an annual Rent, and all this was to be paid by a People who had no Trade or Navigation, and nothing but their Land and Labour to depend on. Nay I may now leave it to this Writer himself, whether sufficient Care had not been taken under that Oeconomy to enrich the *Priesthood*, and impoverish the *People*. So great and unsupportable had been the Oppression, as complained of at the Death of *Solomon*, that ten of the twelve Tribes revolted at once, and never submitted to this Law and Priesthood more. And is not this a Constitution and State of Things to be contended for with so much Zeal, as the necessary Support and Foundation of our *holy Religion*? These sacerdotal Gentlemen shew plain enough where their Grief lies, and what the Sore is which will not bear touching; they seem to feel very sensibly every Wound that can be given to the *Jewish* Priesthood, and by a Sort of

of ſympathetic Communication derive the Pain to themſelves.

The Author goes on to plead ſtrenuouſly for the Reaſonableneſs and Neceſſity of a ſufficient Maintenance to be ſettled upon the Tribe of *Levi*, who were appointed and ſet apart to inſtruct the People in the Law. I think I have proved that they had a ſufficient and more than a reaſonable Maintenance ſettled upon them, and I do not doubt, but they inſtructed the People in the Law of Tithes, Sacrifices, and Church-Dues; but if ever they inſtructed them in the Moral Law, they had either very dull and unapt Scholars, or elſe they had their Maintenance but to little Purpoſe. But the Author pleads for this enormous Church-Conſtitution, as if he was ſuing for his own Maintenance. I am entirely of St *Paul*'s Mind, that they who preach the Goſpel ought to live of the Goſpel, or that they who by good Reaſonings, Exhortations, and an exemplary inſtructive Life, endeavour to promote Peace and Charity, Truth and Righteouſneſs, in the World, ought to be highly eſteemed; but I believe he would not think it reaſonable that 25 Millions *per annum* ſhould be ſettled upon the *Engliſh* Clergy, which is about an annual Rent of the Lands, and this would be vaſtly more than their Due, if one might judge from their own Eſtimate, and conclude that they deſerve juſt ſo much, and no more than they would give to a Subſtitute, or Delegate, to diſcharge the Duty for them; which I have heard ſome Gentlemen ſay is the beſt

beſt and the only true Rule of judging in ſuch a Caſe. But a little Warmth for a neceſſary Maintenance is a very excuſable Part of human Indigence and Frailty.

Page 190—200, the Author makes ſeveral Obſervations concerning the Nature, End, and Uſe of *Expiatory Sacrifices* under the Law; but from all that he has ſaid, I cannot for my Life ſee, that any Thing was forgiven by that Law, otherwiſe than by ſuffering the Penalty preſcribed, and thereby ſatisfying the Law itſelf; and this was the Difficulty I had urged, that there could be no Pardon, where no Puniſhment or legal Demand is remitted; but of this he has not been able to give a ſingle Inſtance, as the Reader will ſee by turning over the Pages which I have referred to; and as to my own part, I am willing to ſave myſelf as much Trouble as poſſible, and by this the Author can loſe nothing.

I had frequently obſerved and urged, that *Moſes* had given his whole Law, both moral and ritual, as merely *poſitive*, or an expreſs Declaration of Will and Pleaſure, which was all, one as much as the other, to be taken upon the Credit of his Miracles and immediate Intercourſe with God. The Author ſpends his whole ſeventh Chapter upon this, without contradicting me in any one particular Inſtance. He obſerves, that both *Moſes* and the Prophets often urge the Reaſonableneſs and Fitneſs of the Moral Law, and they could not do otherwiſe as Prophets and Preachers of Righteouſneſs; but

but neither did *Moſes* or the Prophets ever thus preſs or urge Obedience to the ritual Law from the Reaſonableneſs or Fitneſs of Things, or from the Juſtice and Equity of the Ways of God. The ritual Law could bear no ſuch Argument, nor was it ever urged for it; but as it is the natural Conſequence of *Superſtition* to ſet aſide *Religion*, and of outward *Rights and Ceremonies*, enjoined as the Will of God, to deſtroy *Morality*, ſo it happened with this People; and juſt ſo it has fared with all other Nations, ſo far as *Superſtition* has been miſtaken for *Religion*, and *ſpiritual Purity* confounded with *carnal Hypocriſy*. But he here takes ſome Pains to juſtify the *Jews* as to their Wiſdom and Morality, againſt ſeveral Things which I had urged from their own moſt celebrated Prophets or Preachers of Righteouſneſs. He thinks what I have ſaid bears too hard upon them as a Nation; but their own Prophets, in their pathetic Declamations againſt them, ſpeak of the Nation, or People in general, as moſt infamouſly wicked; and therefore I preſume the Corruption was general, and the Charge was national, though not incluſive of every individual, or all the Members of the Society without Exception. *Their Rulers judged for Reward, their Prieſts preached for Hire, and their Prophets propheſied for Money.* This Author ſeems to have no Notion of any Nation upon Earth that worſhipped the true God but the *Jews*; from whence it is plain, that he has never read the Hiſtory of the *Medes* and *Perſians*

Perſians in Dr *Hyde de Relig. Vet. Perſar.* Theſe were two mighty Nations, and the latter of them governed all *Aſia* for upwards of 200 Years, and they had never from the very firſt Records of Time fallen into the *Sabean* Superſtition of worſhipping Idols and tutelar Gods; they had always worſhipped the one true God, and him alone, without Temples or Images; but *Zoroaſter* indeed introduced Temples with ſacred Fire in them, after the Manner of the *Jews*, and formed their outward Diſcipline and Prieſthood much after the *Moſaic* Model, which was a Corruption rather than a Reformation in the *Perſian* Religion. It was while the *Jews* were ſubject to this People, which was from the Year before Chriſt 538 to 331, that they entirely quitted their Idolatry, and received juſter Notions of God and Providence than they had ever had before, as they took their Notions of the Reſurrection of the Body, and a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments from them. From this Time the *Jewiſh* Books are full of this Religion, which had never been underſtood or taught among them before. When the *Perſians* came to govern *Aſia*, they deſtroyed all the Temples of the antient *Egyptians*, *Aſſyrians*, and *Babylonians*, and had purged *Aſia* of Idolatry, till the *Greek* Conqueſt, under *Alexander* the Great, brought it all in again, and reſtored all the antient *Egyptian* Gods. I have ſaid thus much to give this Author an Occaſion for farther Enquiry; and then he will find that the greater Light of the *Jews*

in

in After-ages, and their juſter Notions of God, Providence, Religion, and a future State, were owing not to *Moſes*, but to *Zoroaſter* and the *Perſians*; and for this one need only appeal to the ſecond Book of *Eſdras*, written about 400 Years before Chriſt, in which the Doctrines of Providence, and a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments, are as plainly and expreſsly delivered and taught as in the Goſpel itſelf. But not to inſiſt longer upon this, as I can ſee nothing in the Author's ſeventh Chapter, relating to the Ritual Law of *Moſes*, but what has been abundantly conſidered and anſwered already, I ſhall paſs it over.

SECT. VI.

The Case of the Benjamites *considered, who were cut off and destroyed by the Advice of the Oracle; the Oracle proved to be the High-Priest himself, and the Author's Objections to it, shewn to be groundless, vain, and frivolous. The Case of the Academical Prophets, and the Evidence of Prophecy, farther considered, and what had been offered upon it, fully vindicated and supported. The persecuting Spirit of the Prophets, and the false Notions of Religion and Polity which they acted upon, farther cleared and justified. They were the true Occasion of the long War between the two Kingdoms, and justified* Asa *in making an Alliance with the idolatrous* Aramites, *while they condemned* Jehosophat *for making an Alliance with* Ahab, *though it was for their natural Defence, and the Safety of both their Kingdoms against a foreign idolatrous Power. That* Samuel *after the Death of* Eli *usurped the High-Priesthood, and acted as High-Priest in presiding in all the Sacrifices for at least* 40 *Years, or till* Saul *was confirmed in the Kingdom, and that before this Renewal of the Kingdom,* Saul *had lived a private Life, and kept no Court for* 18 *or* 20 *Years, proved against the Author's Exceptions and Cavils.* Samuel *being*

diſpoſſeſſed of all Share in the Government, reſolves upon the Deſtruction of Saul *and his Houſe. His Conduct hereupon. The Part that* David *was to act after* Saul's *long and glorious Succeſſes. The Character of* David *as drawn from the Hiſtory. His Hypocriſy, Treaſon, and Perjury, his Character of* Saul *when dead, compared with the Account given of him by* David *and the Prophets while living. What had been ſaid of* David *in the* Moral Philoſopher, *as to his uncovering himſelf in dancing ſhamefully, and as a Fool among the Women, juſtified from the Text againſt this Writer's Evaſions.*

I NOW come to the Author's eighth Chapter, in which he has attacked me upon ſeveral material Points, and therefore I ſhall the more particularly conſider it. And here he firſt undertakes to juſtify the Conduct of the Oracle, or Prieſt, and the *Levite*, where a whole Tribe was cut off at once, Men, Women, and Children, excepting 600 Men who happened to ſave themſelves by Flight. I pity any Man that muſt be put to any ſuch Drudgery, but as he has undertaken it, I muſt attend him in it, and try the Strength of what he has ſaid. I had ſuppoſed this Oracle to have been the ultimate Reſort in Judgment, and that all Caſes which could not otherwiſe be decided, were to be finally decided by the *God of Iſrael*, whoſe Voice could only come from this Oracle. That the High-Prieſt had the

Cuſtody of this Oracle, and that the Oracle could in no Caſe be conſulted without him, cannot be denied. But the Author pretends, that the Oracle was only to decide in public Matters of *Advice*, but not in *Matters* of *Judgment* between Man and Man. That the laſt Reſort lay to the Oracle, *i. e.* to God, in *Cauſes of Judgment*, he ſays, *is a groſs Miſtake, either through Ignorance or Deſign. The* Urim *and* Thummim *was not eſtabliſhed for deciding Cauſes in Judgment, which were decided in another* Method; *but for aſking Counſel of God, and that not in private Affairs, but in Affairs relating to the Public, to the King, or ſome chief Governor, or the whole People of* Iſrael. The Author is very poſitive here, as much as if his Aſſertions were the expreſs Words of Scripture. But who told him that the God of *Iſrael* was never to be ultimately appealed to in Cauſes of Judgment, where a Matter could not be otherwiſe decided? Or what *other Method* was there to be taken in ſuch Caſes? It is certain, that the ultimate Appeal was to the High-Prieſt in all Cauſes of Judgment, and why might he not conſult the Oracle privately in private Affairs, and Matters of Judgment, as well as publickly in public Affairs? Would he make one believe, that God had appointed a Method to be conſulted and adviſed in difficult Caſes, and where there could be no other Deciſion, and yet that this muſt extend only to public Affairs, where the whole Nation were concerned, but not to any Cauſes of Right

and

and Wrong between the ſeveral Members of ſuch a *Theocracy?* Upon this Suppoſition, God would have been only their Generaliſſimo, or chief Captain, to lead in and out their Armies, or adviſe them in what related to Peace and War, but not their King or ſupreme Governour to decide in Appeals of Judgment. In his marginal Note, *pag.* 221, he informs us, that the High-Prieſt could not conſult the Oracle when he pleaſed, but only when the Oracle thought fit to be conſulted and give Anſwers. But how he came to know that the High-Prieſt could not conſult the Oracle when he pleaſed, I cannot imagine. I am ſure he can produce no good Authority for it, and I believe no Authority at all but his own. But, he ſays, we have a plain Inſtance of it in *Saul, who could obtain no Anſwer from God by* Urim, *though he earneſtly deſired it.* He ſhould have ſaid, that the *High-Prieſt* earneſtly deſired this on *Saul*'s Account, and that God would not grant it on the Prieſt's Application. But it is no wonder, that neither the Prieſts nor the Prophets would give *Saul* any Advice, when they were all in *David*'s Intereſt, and *Saul* could have no other Way of conſulting with God but by them. But this Writer's great Zeal and Haſte will not ſuffer him to conſider the Things as they are, but catches at every Straw, or ſlight Appearance, as if he was ſinking. But I hope I need ſay no more to prove, that the ultimate Appeal in Judgment muſt be to the *God* and *King* of *Iſrael*, while he was

locally reſiding among them, and in the ſole Cuſtody of the *High-Prieſt*.

The Author is very long and laborious upon the Story of the *Levite* and his Concubine, and what happened in Conſequence of conſulting the Oracle about it. He wiredraws every Thing, and endeavours to miſrepreſent every Circumſtance of the Story. In the firſt Place, he would not have the Woman to be a Whore, becauſe though the Word ſtrictly and properly ſignifies *playing the Whore*, and has this Signification and Verſion in Abundance of Places, yet he has the Authority of *Grotius* for it, that it may ſignify an *Alienation of Affection*. No doubt of it, but a Woman's *playing the Whore* muſt ſuppoſe an *Alienation of Affection* from her Huſband. But ſuppoſe this Man and Woman had been both innocent, and had received ſuch Injury and Outrage without the leaſt Occaſion or Provocation given: Yet certainly the *Levite* did not take any lawful or juſtifiable Way to right himſelf and procure Satisfaction. He ought to have taken his Remedy at Law, which was open to him, and in which he might have expected the utmoſt Favour, as the ſupreme Power of the Nation was in his Tribe. But his raiſing all the twelve Tribes as he did to revenge his Quarrel, and bringing on ſuch a bloody inteſtine War, as if he had no other Remedy, is what none but a *Levite* could have been capable of. But the Author ſays there was then no *Judge in Iſrael*, thereby intimating that this *Levite* could have had

had no legal Remedy had he ſued for it. But this is abſolutely falſe, and ſuch a Fiction of his own, as I am aſtoniſhed at. There was then indeed no *King in Iſrael*, becauſe it happened long before the Regal Diſpenſation. But as it fell out under the High-Prieſthood of *Phinehas*, *Othniel*, or *Ehud*, muſt have been then *Judge*, and probably the former, ſince it is not likely that *Phinehas* ſhould have outlived *Othniel*. This candid Writer afterwards would repreſent it, as if I had endeavoured to juſtify the *Gibeah* Mob, becauſe the Woman was a *Whore*, or becauſe they might not have behaved decently when they came into the Town. But though both theſe are very probable by the Circumſtances of the Story, as I have obſerved, yet the Inſolence and Outrage of the Mob was certainly inexcuſable, and the guilty ought to have received their juſt Puniſhment, could they have been found out and convicted. But no ſuch Method was taken, and it is very plain, that ſomething more than Law and Juſtice was intended. Had there been then no other Magiſtrate, the High-Prieſt was certainly the ſupreme Magiſtrate, and ought to have done Juſtice, and not to have pretended to a divine Authority, or to the Voice of God, for the Deſtruction of the whole Tribe, and twice the Number of the other Tribes.

It muſt give any Friend of the Author's Pain for him, to ſee how he ſweats and labours to juſtify ſuch unexempled and enormous Villany, Cruelty, and bloody Outrage. *Page* 228, he

ſaith, *The Tribe of* Benjamin *had Notice given them of the Fact, in the ſame Way that all the other Tribes knew it, and were ſummoned to come, as well as the other Tribes, to the General Aſſembly of the Nation.* But what Notice had they given them, or how were they ſummoned? Why, *we are expreſsly told, that the Children of* Benjamin *heard that the Children of* Iſrael *were gone up to* Mizpeh. Yes, they had heard their Deſtruction had been reſolved upon, for an accidental Act committed in their City by Night, and while all ſober People were within Doors, or a Bed. But was this a legal Summons, was this any Method of doing Juſtice before both Sides had been heard? But perhaps this Author may be only writing Booty, with a Deſign to betray the Cauſe which he would ſeem to eſpouſe; or if he ſhould be ſincere in it, I am ſure the Cauſe will have no Reaſon to thank him.

The Author ſays, it is very probable, that all this Uproar and Outrage in beſetting the Houſe, and abuſing the Woman, happened in the *Evening*, he means *before Night*. But this is highly improbable, and will not at all conſiſt with the Circumſtances of the Story. It was late in the Evening before they came into the Town, and they had behaved ſo well in the Streets, that they had gathered a Mob about them, and no Body would take them in, or give them Lodging. It was after Sun-ſet when they came into the Town, but how long is not ſaid. The *Levite* muſt have ſtaid in the

Street ſome conſiderable Time, before he could have made ſuch particular Applications, as to know that no Man would take him into his Houſe. But perhaps the Crime was, that, after he had waited ſo long, no Body came to give him any particular Invitation to a Lodging, and for which, for any Thing that appears, they might have very good Reaſons. But at laſt an *Ephraimite* returning from his Work, which muſt have been in the very Duſk of the Evening, this Stranger having a Houſe in the Town, and hearing what happened to the Way-faring Man, how long he had waited, and underſtanding too that he was a *Levite*, took him in. After all this, at what Time of the Night is not ſaid, but they drinking, carouſing, and making their *Hearts merry*, and one may ſuppoſe too, without any Violence to the Story, that they were pretty loud and noiſy in their Mirth, but ſo it was, that the Houſe was beſet by a Mob, *Men of Belial*, as they are called, who demanded the Man they had ſeen in the Streets. But however this be, it is plain that this revengeful Blood-ſucker was reſolved to make it a public national Quarrel, and to raiſe a War upon it, rather than take any peaceable legal Method for Redreſs. And the Way he contrived to exaſperate the whole Nation, and ſet them all on Fire at once, was ſuch as none but a *Levite* could have thought of; and when he comes to tell the Story to the whole People, aſſembled in Arms, he repreſents it with all the aggravating Circumſtances poſſible, as if the chief Inhabi-

tants

tants or Magiſtrates of the Town had been guilty of all this, and had raiſed a Mob of Ruffians and Villains upon him. But the Author, *page* 229, aſks, *But why then did not the* Benjamites *come as well as the reſt of the Tribes to the General Aſſembly of the Nation, to repreſent this,* who they knew were met together to enquire *into it?* They did not come, becauſe they were never ſummoned to come, or to meet the other Tribes, while they were debating the Matter, and conſidering the Flame that had been kindled, they did not know but any of them that had gone to have confronted and contradicted the *Levite*, who had charged the Guilt upon the whole City, might have been put to the Sword, nay they had all the Reaſon in the World to expect this. Had the Army they met ſent a Summons to the *Benjamites* to appear and anſwer to the Charge of the *Levite*, and promiſed them Protection in ſo doing, there would have been ſome Shew or Appearance of common Juſtice in the Caſe. But nothing of this is ſeen from firſt to laſt. But he goes on, *Why did they not ſhew a Diſpoſition to give them up, if they could be found, and to uſe their beſt Diligence to find them out, and puniſh them?* But does this preſuming *Prieſt-Defender* know that they did not, or is ſuch a Suppoſition conſiſtent with common Senſe, or even with human Nature? Can it be ſuppoſed that a whole City would chuſe rather to be put to the Sword, than give up a few ſuch infamous Rioters, had they known them, or could have proved

proved it upon them, and that the whole Tribe through all their Towns and Cities would have joined with them, and ſupported them in this? This was the Charge indeed of the villanous *Levite*, but the *Benjamites* had never an Opportunity given to confront him, and to clear themſelves, nor Time to find out and puniſh the guilty Perſons, if they could have done it at all. But they muſt be given up immediately and upon Demand. That they might have done it, is preſumed indeed, but had it been capable of Proof, there would have been a fair Hearing and Enquiry upon it, which was never granted or propoſed. Who but ſuch a Writer as this, can imagine that a whole Tribe would chuſe to be cut in Pieces, and totally extirpated, rather than make Satisfaction for the Life of one Woman, if any ſuch Satisfaction could have been accepted? It is very plain from the whole Story, that it was not ſo much the Injury done, as the Perſon to whom it was done, that was the great unpardonable Aggravation of the Crime. And that an Example muſt be made to the Terror of all future Generations, how any one ſhould ever dare to offer the leaſt Slight or Affront to a *Levite*. He goes on; *This no doubt would have ſatisfied their Brethren, who ſufficiently ſhewed how willing they were to accept Satisfaction in a reaſonable Way, and how loth to break with them.* Yes, doubtleſs they ſufficiently ſhewed this, when the very firſt *reaſonable Demand* they made was with an Army of four hundred thouſand Men, and this

this Demand was for a preſent immediate Surrender of the Criminals, whether it could be done or not. But ſurely this Writer, though a good *Advocate*, is not a very *reaſonable Adverſary*; and I fancy he would not talk quite as he does, if he did not apprehend his prieſtly Oracle to be in ſome Danger. What he offers farther to this Purpoſe, proceeds upon the ſame wild Suppoſition, that a whole City and Tribe would chuſe utter Deſtruction, by engaging with 26000 againſt 400000, rather than make any reaſonable Satisfaction in their Power for the Loſs of a ſingle Life, and ſome Slight ſhewn to a private Man.

But let us now ſee how he brings off the Oracle. He has ſo effectually vindicated this bloody Outrage againſt *Benjamin*, that there can be no doubt but he will juſtify the *Oracle* as well. He thinks this War cannot be charged upon the Oracle, who did not adviſe to it at firſt, that having been reſolved upon before. When they aſked Advice for the firſt Time, it was not whether they ſhould undertake the War or not, but which of the Tribes ſhould go up firſt, ſo as to take the Front and chief Command of the Army, and here *Judah* was ordered to go up firſt. Now every one muſt ſee, that this directing the Order of Battle by the Oracle, was approving the War, if he had not ſet them upon it at firſt. But after they had been beaten back that Day with the Loſs of 20000 Men, they put the Queſtion to the Oracle, Whether they ſhould continue the War or

not;

not; for this great Defeat ſeemed to be a plain Indication of Providence that the Cauſe was not juſt. But they were now ordered to go up again, in which ſecond Attack they were repulſed again with the Loſs of 18000 more. In thoſe two Battles the *Benjamites* had ſlain more of their Enemies than their own whole Army amounted to, in the Proportion of 20 to 13, though they fought them at the Diſadvantage of above 15 to 1, and a tenth Part of that vaſt revengeful Army had been cut off. This one would think muſt have been a ſufficient Declaration from Providence of the Injuſtice of their Cauſe, and that they ought to have made Peace, had they not been under the Direction of a *falſe Oracle*. But now in the utmoſt Conſternation and Diſtreſs they conſult their prieſtly Oracle again, who, it is plain, had reſolved upon the utter Deſtruction of the whole Tribe, and now puts them in the Way how to effect it, which they did accordingly. Now I would aſk this Writer, whether his Oracle knew before-hand that the Tribes in the two firſt Attacks would be repulſed with the Loſs of 40000 Men? And whether he had then thought of the Method he put them into at laſt for deſtroying the whole City by Fire and Sword? If he did not know and conſider both theſe before, he could not be *infallible*; and if he did, he could not be *juſt*. And the whole Story evidently ſhews, that this Oracle was neither infallible, wiſe, nor juſt; ſince he might have brought the Matter to an

Accommodation

Accommodation in a more peaceable and righteous Way, without the Effuſion of ſo much Blood on his own Side, and the Loſs of a whole Tribe. This Tribe had been always renowned as the braveſt Men and beſt Soldiers in *Iſrael*, and they gave a Proof of it. And it is remarkable, that *Saul*, the firſt King of *Iſrael*, was choſen out of this Tribe, and out of this very Town. But this Writer's Shifts and Evaſions to juſtify ſuch unparallelled Outrage and Bloodſhed, under the Direction of the Oracle, are ſo wretchedly mean and poor, that I am almoſt aſhamed to mention them. If we aſcribe all this to the High-Prieſt, there will be no Myſtery at all, nor any Thing unaccountable in it, but to aſcribe it immediately to God himſelf, muſt, I think, be not only highly abſurd, but even blaſphemous. I had ſaid that the *Hebrew* Hiſtorian himſelf was ſo far from being ſatisfied of the Juſtice of all this, that he endeavours to excuſe it by ſaying that there was then no King in *Iſrael*, but every Man did that which was right in his own Eyes. And I had obſerved, that this could be no Excuſe at all, becauſe this whole Matter, with Regard to the War with the *Benjamites*, had been managed and carried on under the Direction of the *Oracle*. As to there being no King in *Iſrael*, this had been always the Caſe till *Saul*'s Time, but ſtill God was the King of *Iſrael*, and this God and King of *Iſrael* abode among them, and the High-Prieſt was his ſupreme Miniſter. But the *Hebrew* Hiſtorian does not pretend that there

there was no Government or ſupreme Magiſtrate in *Iſrael*, which is what this Writer would make him ſay. And yet it is plain that the Hiſtorian condemns, or at leaſt tries to excuſe, what this Author labours to juſtify, which was not only the Deſtruction of *Jabeſh-Gilead*, but the War with the *Benjamites*. The Deſtruction of *Jabeſh* was the neceſſary Conſequence of that War, and they were forced then to add one Iniquity to another, and to deſtroy a fine Town for their not coming to aſſiſt them in a Work which they themſelves then repented of. But our Author's Conceit here is very peculiar, he ſays, *page* 233, That all this *is commonly and juſtly thought to have happened between the Death of* Joſhua *and the Elders who ſurvived him, and the Appointment of Judges, the firſt of which was* Othniel. But there was really no ſuch Interval, nor is it thus commonly thought, or ſuppoſed, by any learned Men that I know of, or by any Man acquainted with the preſent State of Chronology. It is now *commonly thought*, that the ſeveral Intervals of Servitude mentioned in the Book of *Judges*, muſt be included in the Reigns of the *Judges* themſelves, or otherwiſe it would be impoſſible to reconcile any Part of the Biblical Chronology during that Time. But the plain Truth of the Matter was, That this revengeful, implacable *Levite*, by the Method he took, had fired and inflamed the whole Nation, and raiſed them into a moſt outragious, ungovernable Mob, without any common Head or Leader. And

this

this being done, no Judge or ſupreme Commander whatever could ſtop the Violence and Impetuoſity of the People, when they had thus thrown off all Order and Government, and taken the Law into their own Hands. And yet in this very Caſe, the High-Prieſt animated and loo'd them on, and put them in a Method of effecting the bloody Work they were come about. I ſay, the *High-Prieſt*; for to conceive ſuch Advice to come immediately from God himſelf, would be a moſt horrible and ſhocking Suppoſition; and yet this Writer ſeems readily diſpoſed to give up all the natural and moral Perfections of the Deity, for the Sake of the *Moſaic* Prieſthood and Sacrifices. Whether this be the Author's *holy Religion*, or *deep Hypocriſy*, I ſhall not take upon me to ſay; but ſurely Chriſtianity muſt be well ſupported, and ſhine forth with all the Beauties of Holineſs, while it has ſuch Advocates and Defenders.

The Author next comes to conſider what I had ſaid about the Order of Academical Prophets, or Spiritual Scholaſtics, inſtituted by *Samuel*. He ſays, *page* 137, *If he intends by this to inſinuate, that there were no Prophets before, it is a great Miſtake, as appears from ſeveral Inſtances of Scripture.* But he muſt know that I could intend to inſinuate no ſuch Thing, ſince I had owned the contrary. God had all along raiſed up Prophets, on extraordinary Occaſions, without any Thing of Academical Learning, or School-Divinity. And thus he raiſed

raiſed up *Amos* under that very learned Diſpenſation, as he did *Daniel* and *Eſdras* afterwards, when that Academic Order had been entirely broke and diſſolved. But this was the firſt Order of Academical Prophets, or School-Divines, and the firſt regular Society of Monks, or religious Recluſes, that we any where meet with, and perhaps the firſt in the World. Their Order was hereditary, for the Sons of the Prophets were Prophets, and intitled to their Commons upon the School-Foundations. Yet this Order or Office was not excluſive of others, who might be received and admitted, if regularly approved of by the Society. And even *Saul* himſelf was twice like to have been made a Prophet againſt his Will, which became a common Jeſt and Proverb among the People.

The firſt great Foundation of this Kind had been ſettled and endowed by *Samuel* himſelf at *Naioth*, but afterwards there were ſeveral other ſuch Schools ſet up in different Parts of the Nation. I ſuppoſe thoſe Schools were reſorted to as a Sort of Churches or Oratories, before Synagogues had been introduced and ſettled, which was not till after the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, when the Schools of the Prophets had been all demoliſhed and ſet aſide. But what this Author ſeems to imagine, that theſe Schools of the Prophets were public Seminaries of Learning, like our Univerſities and Academies now, is a mere Fiction. The prophetic Order was a ſeparate diſtinct Society, who led a monaſtic Life, and never concerned themſelves with the

common Buſineſs, Trades, or Profeſſions of other Men. The Prophets were not Profeſſors of Divinity, Law, or Phyſic, ſo as to teach their Arts and Sciences to others who were not of their own Order and Society. They muſt then ſoon have had Schools ſet up againſt them, and one Order diſtinguiſhed from, and contending with, another, which we no where find. But the Prophets were certainly an Order of Men better united, and never made their Learning common and popular. This muſt have ſoon expoſed the whole Art, blown up the Order, and put an End to the Society. They might keep up public Oratories in their Schools, as I ſuppoſe they did, for inſtructing the People, and keeping them as much as they could to the Moral Law. They inveighed very much againſt the too great Streſs laid upon the Ritual Law, and the unreaſonable Attachment of the People to their Prieſts and Sacrifices. This we find them very much inſiſting on, in thoſe Writings and Memoirs of their Lives ſtill remaining and tranſmitted to us. This ſeems to have been the great and main Deſign of their Inſtitution, and had they kept to this, and not intermeddled too much in State-Affairs, and taken upon them to diſpoſe of the Crown, and to raiſe popular Tumults and Rebellions as often as a King did not pleaſe them, they might have been a very uſeful Order, and kept their Intereſt longer both with Prince and People. But in this *Samuel*, their great Founder, had led the Way, and they could do nothing of this Kind

without an Example. The great Pretence for this was *rooting out Idolatry*, which they knew no effectual Way of doing, but by Fire and Sword, and yet they could never find a King to their Purpose; but when they had got rid of one King by a *Revelation* from God, the next was rather worse, and all their Politicks of this Kind were continually defeated.

But before I come to this Author's particular Exceptions to what I had offered concerning Prophecy, I shall take leave to make two Remarks. The first is, That I had never denied the punctual circumstantial Accomplishment of some of the Prophecies; and therefore in what he offers with Regard to the exact Fulfilment of some of them, he is not in the least contradicting me, nor saying any Thing to the Argument, so far as I am at all concerned in it. All that I insisted on was, That this Spirit of Prophecy had no Connexion with the Moral Character, and that it could not prove either the Righteousness of the Prophet, or the Truth of his Religion. But the other general Observation I would make is, That it is very difficult, if not impossible for us, now to distinguish what was really prophetic in those Writings, from what is barely historical. It is well known to the Learned, that most or all of those Books have been revised and altered by after-Editors, who took the Liberty to add and supply what they thought fit; and therefore they might sometimes supply the particular Times and Circumstances in Prophecies, which

at first had been delivered only in general. The Prophecy of *Isaiah*, concerning the *Assyrian* Captivity, was of a Thing which happened in his own Time, and above 30 Years before his Death; and the Prophecy in *Ezekiel* of the 390 Years between the Revolt of the Tribes and the Destruction of the Temple was then expired, and God had never told this Prophet, or any other, that the Time would be just 390 Years, till the *Babylonians* had actually besieged the City, and the Event was unavoidable.

But not to detain the Reader longer in Generals, I now come to the Author's particular Objections. From *page* 245—254, he gives many Instances of Prophecies which he thinks were exactly fulfilled; but as this is nothing at all to the Purpose against me, I shall let it pass. At the close of this Chapter, he runs into an Harangue of four or five Pages about true and false Prophets. The Prophets were a regular formed Society, instituted by *Samuel*, who were to subsist and hold together by their own Laws and Constitutions, as the Priesthood had been instituted by *Moses*; and while they continued in the same Society and Order, without being deposed or expelled by their own Laws and original Constitution, they were true Prophets, or Prophets *of the Lord*, as much as the Priests were *Priests of the Lord*, though yet either one or the other might be very bad Men; and the 400 Prophets in *Ahab*'s Time are called Prophets of the Lord, and *Jehoshaphat* asks him, whether he had never another

another *Prophet of the Lord*; they are indeed called *Ahab*'s Prophets too, becauſe they were all his Subjects, and *Micajah* was as much *Ahab*'s Prophet as any of the reſt. But this Author will not have them to be *true Prophets*, or *Prophets of the Lord*, unleſs their Predictions come to paſs. But I ſhould think that a wicked Prieſt muſt be a Prieſt, and may be a Prieſt of the *Lord*, as well as of *Baal*. But by the Author's Rule was not *Nathan* a falſe Prophet, when he propheſied the Perpetuity of *David*'s Kingdom, the far greater Part of which revolted the very next Generation, and never returned to their Obedience more? But he will ſay that Prophecy was conditional, becauſe I had ſaid it in a Joke, that this as well as moſt of the other Prophecies were conditional. But ſurely a conditional *Prophecy* is as great a Myſtery as an abſolute or unconditional *Covenant*, and yet our ſyſtematical Writers muſt ſuppoſe and maintain both. *Moſes* indeed had given a Rule whereby to know whether the Lord had ſpoken to a Prophet or not, and that was whether the Thing did or did not come to paſs; and if it did not come to paſs, the Prophet was to be put to Death. Had this Law been executed in *Ahab*'s Time, it might have ſpared the Queen's Trouble and the King's Life, ſince every one of thoſe Prophets of the Lord, excepting only one Man, ought to have been put to Death by their own Law, as Impoſtors and Forgers of a Commiſſion from God. But the Author here grants as much in Effect as I had

aſſerted or intended, that moſt of thoſe regular authorized *Prophets of the Lord*, were falſe Prophets with Regard to their Predictions, and that they give us no Rule to diſtinguiſh their *Prophecies* from their *Preachings*. And indeed it ſeems to me, that thoſe Prophets had no certain Criterion themſelves, whereby to know whether their Viſion was from the Lord, or only a Deluſion. What could the King and People think at the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, when *Jeremiah* and *Hananiah* propheſied ſo vehemently one againſt another, declaring with the utmoſt Aſſurance, in the Name of the Lord, quite contrary Things? It was this Confuſion and Oppoſition of the Prophets among themſelves that at laſt ſet them all aſide; ſince the People could have no Rule to judge by, and every one of them was equally a true Prophet, till the Event proved the contrary; and they did nothing by all their Pretenſions to ſupernatural Light, but divide and diſtract the Nation.

The Author in his 9th Chapter purſues the Buſineſs of Prophecy, and undertakes to free the Prophets from the Charge of acting upon the Principles of Perſecution, and embroiling the State about Religion, which, as they thought, could only be effectually ſecured by Compulſion and Force of Arms. The great and conſtant Ground of Quarrel between the Author and me is this, That I cannot believe the Infallibility of the *Hebrew* Hiſtorians, or any hiſtorical Infallibility which he cannot

prove;

prove; and that I diſlike the Conduct of the Prophets, in the violent and forcible Methods they took to ſecure the Worſhip of the true God, which he cannot *juſtify*. If he could prove the firſt of theſe, and juſtify the latter, this Controverſy would be at an End, for I ſhould never ſtruggle againſt Light and Conviction. But the firſt of theſe, the *Infallibility* of the *Hiſtorians*, he has not ſo much as attempted to prove; and what he has here offered in Juſtification of the latter, I muſt now examine. He all along, in a very warm and angry Way, repreſents it as a great Inconſiſtency and Self-contradiction in me, that after I had approved of the prophetic Inſtitution, on its original Plan and main Deſign, I ſhould yet blame the Conduct of the Prophets afterwards for intermeddling ſo much in State-Matters, turning Politicians, and by their pretended new Light keep the Nation continually in a Flame; as if one might not approve of and admire the original Inſtitution of the Chriſtian Miniſtry, as to its firſt Intention and Deſign, and then Cenſure, and condemn the groſs Corruptions and Abuſes of this Order in all Parts of Chriſtendom for 1600 Years back. This is all the Inconſiſtency he can charge me with; but when the Argument fails him he is ſtill angry with me, though he ſhould rather blame the Argument itſelf, and cry out, *O Argument, Argument, the Lord rebuke thee!* This was very honeſt in the *Quaker*, but might not look triumphant in a *ſyſtematical Divine*; but might not the

Prophets be firſt intended as Preachers of Righteouſneſs, and Examples of Mortification and Self-Denial, and yet afterwards turn gifted Politicians, and overthrow the State?

The Author, *page* 266, repreſents it as a moſt abſurd and idle Suppoſition in me, that the Confirmation of *Saul* in the Kingdom, or his taking upon him the State and Dignity of King, was not till about 20 Years after he had been firſt anointed and made King by *Samuel*. I had confirmed this from Circumſtances of the Hiſtory which this Writer could not anſwer, and therefore he has ſaid nothing to it, but he endeavours to ſet it aſide by other Circumſtances of the Story, and from the Authority of *Joſephus*. I had obſerved, that when *Saul* was firſt anointed, he was a young Man in his Prime and Bloom, and this I proved from the expreſs Words of Scripture, and the Teſtimony of *Joſephus* too. *Saul* therefore at this Time could have had no Son, but what muſt have been a Child, Infant, or very young Lad. But when *Saul* was confirmed in the Kingdom upon his having raiſed the Siege of *Jabeſh*, *Jonathan* was grown up and formed an able Soldier, and had the chief Command of the Army under the King. *Jonathan* therefore muſt be ſuppoſed in the Prime and Strength of his Years, as *Saul* himſelf was when he was firſt anointed King; but though our Author has been pleaſed to ſay nothing at all to this, I ſhall conſider all that he has offered to the contrary. In the firſt Place then, he ſays, that *if I will govern myſelf*

ſelf by the Chronology of Joſephus, *the beſieging of* Jabeſh-Gilead *was but a Month after* Saul's *Inauguration at* Mizpeh. But does this anſwer what I had offered from Scripture itſelf? Or will this Syſtematiſt ſtand to *Joſephus* againſt the Bible? *Joſephus* is the laſt Man whoſe Authority I ſhould take in Chronology, and in this very Caſe he is guilty of a monſtrous Abſurdity, for he ſuppoſes the 40 Years of *Saul*'s Reign, to have been 18 of them in *Samuel*'s Life-time, and 22 after his Death; at which rate, *David* could have been but ſix Years old at moſt when *Samuel* died; but doubtleſs he miſtook the 18 Years in which *Samuel* governed jointly with *Saul*, for the whole Time of *Samuel*'s Life; and confounded the 22 Years afterwards in which *Saul* had reigned alone, without any Authority in *Samuel*, with the Time which he ſurvived *Samuel*, which could not have been more than two Years. And *Joſephus* himſelf has given us a ſufficient Reaſon why we ought not to truſt him in Chronology; for he informs us, that he had faithfully related the Hiſtory of their Nation juſt as he found it in the *Hebrew* Books without any Alteration; and therefore he muſt neceſſarily contradict himſelf, as often as he tranſcribes or copies after Authors, who were not conſiſtent with one another. But it ſeems this Confirmation of *Saul* in the Kingdom, could have been but a very ſhort Time after the firſt Inauguration; becauſe the War they were threatened with from the *Ammonites*, is *the very Reaſon given for making*

Saul

Saul *King, and the Siege of* Jabeſh-Gilead, *the very next Tranſaction recorded after* Saul *had been anointed.* But it is well known that the *Hebrew* Hiſtorians, who only give us ſome ſhort Memoirs and Abſtracts of the principal Tranſactions, very often mention Things immediately one after another, which had been done 20 or 30 Years, and ſometimes two or three Generations apart, where nothing extraordinary or very remarkable had happened in the Interval. This is ſo very common with them, that ſurely this learned Writer cannot want Inſtances of it; they might have been threatened with a War from the *Ammonites*, and might have been actually at War with that Nation up and down 20 or 30 Years before the Siege of *Jabeſh*, and before *Saul* was confirmed in the Kingdom, and *Samuel* quite ſet aſide in the Government. When *Saul* was firſt anointed, we hear nothing of *Samuel*'s great Age, or of his Diſpoſition to retire from public Buſineſs, but when *Saul* had been confirmed in the Kingdom, and took upon him the State and Dignity of a King, and came to keep two Courts, one for himſelf, and the other for *Jonathan*, who had 1000 Men allowed him for his conſtant Guards and Attendants; at this Time, I ſay, *Samuel* repreſents himſelf as grown very old, and takes his ſolemn Leave of them as to the Affairs of the Government. And had this been at *Saul*'s firſt Inauguration, or 40 Years before his Death, it is not probable that *Samuel* ſhould have lived 38 or 39 Years longer, or within a

Year

Year or two of *Saul*'s Death, as he muſt have done.

By the Conſtitution of this Law, the High-Prieſt was to keep a more ſplendid and numerous Court than any Prince in the World. Into this Court was to be paid all the Tenths, Dues, Offerings, Forfeitures, Deodands, *&c.* as preſcribed by the Law; and this, as I have proved, aroſe to at leaſt an annual Rack-Rent upon the Lands, which muſt have amounted to about a third Part of the whole Produce of the Land, in Corn, Wine, Oil, Cattle, *&c.* and was pretty near the Caſe, as it ſtood in *Egypt*, from whence this Lawgiver had took his Plan. This being the Caſe, it was impoſſible that any other public, ſplendid, or numerous Court ſhould be kept by any Revenues from the People, without ſeizing upon and detaining a conſiderable Part of the legal Rights and Dues of the Prieſthood; and therefore the Judges were to live only as private Men, unleſs when they headed the Armies, and went in and out before the whole People: They were to keep no Court at any public Expence, nor were there any Taxes or Contributions from the People allotted them by Law. *Gideon* was taken from his threſhing to judge *Iſrael*; and when he had ſubdued the *Midianites*, he returned to his threſhing again: and *Deborah*, the Propheteſs, while the People reſorted to her for Judgment, lived under a Palm-Tree in Mount *Ephraim*.

Moſes foreſaw that this People might, ſome Time or other, chuſe a King, or chief Commander,

mander, and poſſibly ſettle the Office or Dignity in a particular Family. But then he intended that every ſuch King ſhould conform himſelf exactly to the Law; in which Caſe he could have kept no Court at any public Expence, for which no legal Proviſion had been made; and this Law was unalterable, and no new Law could be added to it afterward. The Kings therefore, had they not broke in upon the fundamental Conſtitution of the Law, muſt have lived privately, as the Judges had done before, or quite exhauſted and impoveriſhed the Nation. And ſuch was *Saul*'s Caſe for the firſt eighteen or twenty Years of his Reign, while the Prophet, who kept no Court at any public Expence, managed all the public Affairs of the Government in time of Peace. But when *Saul* came to take upon him the State and Dignity of a King, and to keep ſeparate, ſumptuous, and numerous Courts of his own, as did all the Kings after him; it is evident that a great Part of the legal Revenues, which had been before paid in to the Court of the Lord, muſt now be taken to ſupport the King's Court; the ſupreme Power was now no longer in the Tribe of *Levi*, the High-Prieſt was become a Subject, and the God of *Iſrael* depoſed and ſet aſide from being King of *Iſrael*. And I have ſhewn already, that the local, oracular, tutelar God of *Iſrael*, who was always ſuppoſed to reſide in the Sanctuary in the Cuſtody of the High-Prieſt, was a mere Cheat, and as much

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an Idol, as the tutelar oracular and reſidential Gods of *Egypt* and other Nations.

But this vaſt Revolution in the Government did not affect the Prieſthood in *David*'s Time, who was ſo far from leſſening their Revenues that he added to them, and by his vaſt Succeſſes in all his Wars drew in Wealth and Treaſure enough to ſupport his ſplendid Court, and lay up immenſe Treaſures beſides for the building the Temple which he had projected; the Plan of which he gave to *Solomon* who was to build this glorious Edifice. But *Solomon*, in perfecting this and his other ſumptuous Structures, was forced to lay ſuch Taxes and Burdens upon the People, which, together with the Weight of the Prieſthood, became unſupportable. And therefore this great and wiſe King, in his own Time, was forced to diſpenſe with the Law of Sacrifices and Church Dues, as they had been enjoined by the Law of *Moſes*, and to indulge the People in chuſing their own Prieſts, and directing their Sacrifices, and reducing their Expences that way as they thought fit.

But this Indulgence of *Solomon* made the latter Part of his Reign very uneaſy: For the Prophets, joining with the deſerted Prieſts, formed Plots and Conſpiracies againſt the King, to oblige him, if poſſible, to revoke his Indulgence and Toleration, and to bring back the People to the legal Prieſthood. But this he would never do, for the Prieſts of the Lord were now become *Solomon*'s Prieſts, and he could manage them as he pleaſed. But on the Death

Death of *Solomon*, the People being reſolved effectually to ſecure an Exception from the Burden of the legal Prieſthood, which, together with the Weight of the Crown, could be no longer born, and not being able to obtain any ſuch Promiſe or Security from *Rehoboam*, *Solomon*'s Son and Succeſſor; not being able, I ſay, to obtain this, ten of the twelve Tribes revolted at once under *Jeroboam*, and never ſubmitted to that grievous Yoke of the *Moſaic* Prieſthood more. Thus the Prophets, by joining with the Prieſts, and ſtruggling to ſupport this Part of the Law, made the Matter vaſtly worſe, and ſtill made it worſe and worſe in purſuing the ſame Point, from time to time, till they had loſt all and had no other Game to play. This, I think, is a juſt and plain Account of the Matter as it ſtands in Fact, and as it muſt ſtand in all human Reaſon and Policy. But if our Author, thro' his ſyſtematical Spectacles, cannot ſee this in *School-Divinity*, I ſhould adviſe him to lay aſide thoſe falſe Glaſſes in order to ſee Things as they are, and as they would appear to his own natural *Eye-ſight*. But if he will not do this, and will ſtill go on to confound *School-Divinity* with *Chriſtianity*, I verily believe that his *Spectacle-Religion* muſt, at laſt, give way to the true and *natural one*.

As to *Samuel*'s uſurping the High-Prieſthood from the Death of *Eli* till *Saul*, being confirmed in the Kingdom, put in *Abia*, which I had aſſerted, this cautious Writer neither affirms nor denies it directly, but endeavours to evade it as what

what cannot be proved. He does not tell us who was the High-Prieſt during the Interval, or whether *Ahia*, the great-grand-ſon of *Eli*, was his immediate Succeſſor in the High-Prieſthood; or whether there muſt have been a Vacancy of the High-Prieſthood, and conſequently of all Prieſthood, for forty or fifty Years together. Such Queſtions might have puzzled his Divinity. But this is not all, for he cannot ſee any thing in the Bible, though ever ſo plain, but what he finds in his Syſtems, ſuch is the Nature of the Glaſſes he makes uſe of: But let him only lay aſide his Spectacles, and conſult the following Texts; 1 *Sam.* vii. 9. ix. 12. x. 8, 11, 14, 15. When he has conſidered theſe Texts, let him tell what he thinks of *Samuel*'s High-Prieſthood, or whether there was then any other Prieſt above him, while he had all the Power of the Kingdom in his Hands. It is plain, from theſe Texts, that *Samuel* preſided, and offered up all the Sacrifices and Burnt-Offerings upon all great and public Solemnities; and, by the laſt Text quoted, *Samuel* officiated, upon that grand Occaſion of all, when *Saul* was confirmed in the Kingdom, and took upon him the whole Power of the Government; but had *Samuel* acted only as a common Prieſt, or in the loweſt Order of Prieſthood, he muſt have uſurped the Office as much as *Saul* did, for which he was to loſe the Kingdom.

When *Saul* had taken upon him the whole Power of the Kingdom, and the Prophet had been thereby forced to quit all his Share of the Govern-

Government, the Succeſſion in the High-Prieſthood was left free and open in the legal Way, and then *Ahia* came to it of courſe, and *Samuel* was obliged to quit all Pretenſions to Prieſthood. Now I had ſaid a great deal to ſhew, that from the natural and obvious Conſtruction of the Story, and as the Thing muſt be underſtood in any other Author, *Samuel*, from this very Time, plotted and contrived the Ruin of *Saul* and his Family, and took all the artful Methods in the World to bring it about; and I had ſaid, that this Plot at laſt ſucceeded by a long Train of Falſhoods, Hypocriſy, Treaſon, and Rebellion, or Words to this Effect. And this muſt have been ſo, if we were to judge of Things in a natural Way, and underſtand this Hiſtory as one would any other, where the holy Name of God might be thus abuſed, to countenance what muſt have been otherwiſe condemned as very inhuman and unrighteous. This Way the Author takes, and then falls foul upon me for not believing what he always ſuppoſes, but cannot prove. It is, I think, very plain, that when the Prophet found he could not abſolutely govern the King, he immediately reſolved upon his Deſtruction; and his Pretence to a Divine Commiſſion for all that he did made the Matter ſtill worſe. From the time that *Saul* took upon him the whole Power of the Kingdom, he had a long Train of Victories and Succeſſes; he freed the Country from the Devaſtations and Inroads of all the Nations round about that had ever given them any Diſturbance,

Diſturbance, and never was any King better or more generally beloved by his People. When *David* firſt began his Rebellion, no Man of any Fortune or Credit would join him; none but a few ragged infamous Wretches, who could not pay their Debts, or who fled from Juſtice; and all ſuch he received and protected againſt all Law and Right, and had made them up at laſt to the Number of 600 Men; 1 *Sam.* xxii. 2. When he came into *Philiſtia* he acted the ſame treacherous Part there that he had done in his own Country. No doubt but *David* was the moſt artful Diſſembler that ever lived; ſoon after he came into *Philiſtia*, he had made *Achiſh*, King of *Gath*, believe, that he had entirely quitted the Intereſt of his own Country, and was ready to ſacrifice his All, and do any thing in his Power, to ſerve the *Philiſtines*; and as he had a peculiar Way of ingratiating himſelf by cloathing all his Deceit with a moſt plauſible Appearance of Sanctity, and ſolemn Appeals to the God of Heaven for his Truth and Integrity, the King of *Gath*, never having ſeen nor known ſuch a Saint before, believed him, and gave him a whole Town, *Ziklag*, for him and his 600 Nonpareils. *David* having gained his Point, and ſecured himſelf in the Truſt of the credulous King, got up one Day, and, with his Raggamuffins, went and deſtroyed all the South Coaſts of *Philiſtia* towards *Egypt*, not leaving a Man to carry Tidings of what had been done; and when he came back, upon the King's aſking him where they had been to

Day, told him, that they had been againſt the South Parts of *Judea*, and had cut them all off. All this *Achiſh* believed, for who could diſcredit ſuch a ſolemn Swearer in the Name of the Lord, and a Man who was always ready to imprecate the moſt direful Vengeance upon himſelf, if he was not ſincere? The *Philiſtines* now thought themſelves pretty ſure of *David*, for he had prevailed with them to raiſe a mighty Army againſt *Iſrael*, and offered to head their Forces. But this was not accepted, for the reſt of the Princes of *Philiſtia* were not quite ſo blind as *Achiſh*, and blamed him for the Truſt he had repoſed in this artful Fugitive. However *David* had gained his Point, and raiſed a *Philiſtine* Army, which he thought would be ſufficient to anſwer his Purpoſe, againſt his King and Country, and by cutting off *Saul* and his Family might give him a good Chance for the Kingdom: He therefore haſtens into *Judea* a Day or two before the Army could come up; and *Jonathan* meeting him, with great Joy and the ſincereſt Friendſhip, congratulated his Succeſs, and finding he muſt be now King, ſubmitted to it, only deſiring ſtill to be his Friend and Favourite, and the ſecond Man in the Kingdom; but *David* had now no farther Occaſion for *Jonathan*, and therefore ſent him away into the Army to join his Father, and two other Brothers, againſt the *Philiſtines*, and to fall with them; which happened according to his Wiſhes. And this Conduct towards *Jonathan* gives one a true Idea of the Sanctity and Fidelity of this

divine Hypocrite. After the *Iſraelite* Army had been totally routed, *Saul* and his Sons ſlain, and *David*'s Wiſhes thus far crowned, he gives another flagrant Inſtance of his deep and moſt deteſtable Hypocriſy; for he ordered the Meſſenger, who came to bring him the good News, and who might have expected a vaſt Reward, he ordered him, I ſay, to be ſlain, becauſe he had diſpatched the King, and put him out of Pain at his own earneſt Requeſt, while he lay dying and agonizing upon his own Sword. This Man had laid his Hands upon the *Lord's anointed*, for which he muſt die. And now this Mirror of Diſſimulation, and true Original of religious Hypocriſy, breaks out into a moſt pathetic Lamentation for *Saul*, extols him to the Heavens, as the greateſt *Hebrew* Worthy, and the moſt renowned Hero that ever lived, the Pride and Glory of his Country. *O noble Iſrael, he is ſlain upon the high Places, how are the Mighty fallen! tell it not in Gath, publiſh it not in the ſtreets of Aſkelon, leſt the Daughters of the Philiſtines rejoice, leſt the uncircumciſed be glad. Ye Mountains of Gilboa, upon you be neither Dew nor Rain, nor Fields of Offerings, for there the Shield of the Mighty is fallen, the Shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with Oil. The Bow of Jonathan that never turned back, neither did the Sword of Saul return empty from the Blood of the ſlain, and from the Fat of the mighty. Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleaſant in their Lives, and in their Death were they not divided; they were ſwifter than Eagles, they were ſtronger*

than Lions. Ye Daughters of Iſrael weep for Saul, who clothed you in ſcarlet, and decked your Garments with Ornaments of Gold. How were the Mighty ſlain in the midſt of Battle. O Jonathan, thou waſt ſlain in thy high Places.—— *Thy Love to me was wonderful, paſſing the Love of Women*; ſee 2 *Sam.* i. 19, *&c.* But, O Heavens! is human Nature capable of ſuch Depths of Deceit? This is the Man, who, while he lived, deſpiſed the Prophets, ſlew the Prieſts, conſulted with Demons and Witches, and was little better than the Devil himſelf. This is the Man betrayed and ruined by a revengeful Prophet, and treacherous, rebellious Son-in-law, the Man who had been pronounced from God unworthy of the Kingdom; who had invaded the Prieſt's Office, and for which both he and his Family had been moſt divinely doomed to Deſtruction: And, O *Jonathan!* let ſuch Friendſhip never more fall into the Hands of ſuch Perfidy. I have here given the Character of *Saul* from *David* himſelf, becauſe I believe it is the juſteſt that could be given, and is very poetically and beautifully drawn, and, conſidering the Hand it comes from, no one can doubt of its being genuine and authentic.

But before we purſue the Hiſtory of *David*, it will be proper to look back a little, to the Time when *Saul* was hunting him from one Receſs to another upon the Mountains, after he had begun the Rebellion, and appeared in open Arms againſt his King, his Father-in-law, and his Country. During this Time, the artful

Traitor had watched an Opportunity twice to get the King into his Power, while he was asleep, but surrounded with his Army and Guards; and this he improves afterward, when he came near enough to speak to *Saul*, as an evident Proof of his Innocency, and that he could have no Design upon his Life or Kingdom, since he did not kill him when he might have done it. The brave Prince, though too credulous, seems struck with this, professes his Sorrow that he had so much mistaken the Intensions of his dear Son *David*, and invites him to lay down his Arms, return to his Obedience, and come back again to his House; upon which he promises him a kind Reception, and to forgive all that was past: But *David* understood better Things, and had no such Game to play. But as to his Pretence of Innocency, because he had not killed the King, the Sophistry and Deceit of it is transparent; for, in the first place, it must have been a thousand to one, in such a Case, if the Murderer had escaped and got clear off without being discovered and taken. But in the next place, had he succeeded, it must have blown up the whole Plot, and *David* could never have come to the Crown. This mighty Revolution was to be brought about, in Appearance, purely by God and Providence: Righteous *David* was to have no hand in it, though *Samuel* had privately anointed him, and promised him the Kingdom before he was taken into *Saul*'s Family: But this was to be kept as a deep Secret between the Prophet and

the Shepherd. If any Suſpicions ſhould ariſe, *David* was to purge himſelf by the moſt ſolemn Oaths, Proteſtations, and Imprecations of Vengeance, in the Name of God; and this he punctually kept to, and gained his Point by it: But had he watched an Opportunity, and murdered the King privately, or ordered it to be done, the whole Plot muſt have broke out, and the whole Nation would have riſe upon the Murderer and Traitor and ſtoned him. This is the Man who had no Views to the Kingdom, nor any the leaſt Deſign upon the King's Life, when he only waited for an Opportunity to cut his Throat! Was ever ſuch Villainy? Shall this Man reign over us? Is this the ſolemn Swearer, the imprecating Vower, and Man of Integrity? Away with him to the Devil, from whence he came.

When *Saul* ſpoke with *David* upon the Mountains, he intreated him that if he ſhould ſucceed him in the Kingdom, he would ſhew Kindneſs to his Family, and ſpare them when they might be in his Power; and *David* ſwore to him ſolemnly, in the Name of God, that he would do ſo: But how well he kept his Oath, or how religiouſly he broke it, we ſhall ſoon ſee. After the Death of *Saul*, *David* was preſently made King of *Judah* in *Hebron*; but he maintained a War for 7 or 8 Years after that againſt the Houſe of *Saul*, for the whole Kingdom; and this War was, doubtleſs, mere Providence, the pure Work of God, and *David* had no hand in it any more than he had had hitherto;

hitherto: But when he had ſucceeded in this, let us ſee how he treats *Saul*'s Family after they were become his Subjects and Slaves. *Jonathan*, the Prince Royal, whom this artful Diſſembler had betrayed and ruined, had one only Son left, whoſe Name was *Mephiboſheth*. This Son of *Jonathan David* ſpared, and ſuffered him to enjoy his paternal Eſtate for ſome time, but took the firſt Opportunity to ſtrip him of his Eſtate, and give it to a treacherous Servant. At the Time of *Abſalom*'s Rebellion, *Mephiboſheth*, having been lame from his Youth, ordered his Servant *Ziba* to ſaddle his Aſs, that he might go with the King over *Jordan*, who was then forced to fly from his rebel Son; but his Servant deceived him, and went with the King without him. The poor Prince, grievouſly afflicted at this, kept himſelf in mourning, and neither waſhed nor ſhaved till the Rebellion had been ſuppreſſed by the Death of *Abſalom*, and then he went to meet *David*, who was now returning again to *Jeruſalem*. But in the mean while, this grateful Tyrant had given away his Eſtate to *Ziba*, the Prince's treacherous Servant, who had maliciouſly accuſed him for not coming to meet the King, after he had refuſed to ſaddle his Aſs, and gone away without him. *Mephiboſheth* repreſents this to *David*, in the moſt humble and moving Manner; which had no other Effect upon this Pattern and Original of Ingratitude and Cruelty, but to draw this churliſh Anſwer from him: *Why ſpeakeſt thou any more to me of thy Matters, I have ſaid, Thou*

and Ziba divide the Eſtate. Nay, ſaid the unfortunate Prince, *let him take all, ſeeing my Lord the King is come home in Peace*, 2 Sam. xix. 24—30. *Poor Man!* —— This is the Son of the brave invincible *Jonathan*, whom this artful Traitor had deceived and ruined, now reduced to Charity and Inſults at the Tyrant's Table. But this Man after God's own Heart, who did nothing but by Advice from the Lord, could not think himſelf ſafe, as long as any of *Saul*'s Family or Deſcendants remained alive; for as he muſt be conſcious of his own Falſhood and Baſeneſs, he was the moſt, of any Man alive, jealous and ſuſpicious of all others. I had obſerved that *David*, during the Rebellion, had ſworn ſolemnly to *Saul*, that when he came to the Kingdom he would ſpare his Houſe or Seed, and ſhew Kindneſs to his Family. This was all that brave unhappy Prince had then to aſk; and this the rebel Son and Traitor ſwore to him, 1 *Sam.* xxiv. 22, 23. But when *David* was now eſtabliſhed in the Kingdom there happened a three Years Dearth, and God had, it ſeems, told him, that his ſparing the Houſe of *Saul* had been the Occaſion of that Calamity; ſo that God now put him upon the moſt complicated Iniquity of Perjury, Cruelty, and Inhumanity, to crown all his other Deeds of Truth and Righteouſneſs. *David* therefore now ſends to the *Gibeonites*, and aſks them what he ſhould do for them, ſo as to make Atonement for the Injuries *Saul* had done them. They underſtood him very well, and told him they

they ſhould aſk neither Silver nor Gold, but only *Saul*'s Sons to be given up to them. This was readily complied with, and ſeven Sons of *Saul* given up, whom the *Gibeonites* hanged up all together. It is indeed ſaid, *ver.* 7. that *David* ſpared *Mephiboſheth*, becauſe of an Oath that had been made to *Jonathan*; and he barely ſpared the Life of this Son of *Jonathan* after he had ſtript him of all, and put him out of a Condition ever to marry, or ſettle any Dowery. And thus did this Man after God's own Heart obey the Voice of the Lord, and ſtopt the Famine in the Land by Perjury and Murder.

As ſoon as this King came to the Throne, he made it his Buſineſs to careſs and oblige the Prieſts and Prophets, to ſecure them in his Intereſt, and herein he ſucceeded ſo well, that he ſoon became the Idol of both, as he has been the Idol of all Prieſts and Prophets ever ſince. But theſe two Orders being thus ſettled in *David*'s Intereſt, he could never want an Atonement for his Sins, nor an Hiſtorian to extol his Reign, and give his Vices the Gloſs of Virtue.

Soon after *David* was made King of all *Iſrael*, he brought the Ark of God from the Houſe of *Abinadab* to his own City, *Jeruſalem:* Upon this Occaſion they had a grand national Proceſſion of both Sexes, ſuch as could dreſs well. The King himſelf began this Proceſſion in ſacerdotal Robes; for having now the abſolute Command of the whole Kingdom, and his

his God in a Coffer, the *King* thought fit, upon such an Occasion, to turn himself into a *Priest*. But in the Heat of this Devotion, while *David* was *leaping and dancing before the Lord*, he threw back his *priestly Robes*, or threw them quite off, and uncovered himself before the Lord, and the Women, the *Daughters of his People*, *as a Fool uncovereth himself*. And this which the Queen saw from a Window, she charged him with, in Scorn and Contempt, and he could not deny it. But our admirable Author refers me to several Passages, to shew that *David* was covered all this while. These Places, how that he began the Procession in Priest Orders, but that he did not uncover himself afterward in the Heat of his Zeal, this *Deponent saith not*. I had made but a Jest of this at first, and ascribed it to the King's Zeal. But our Author has made a greater Jest of it, and will not believe the Queen's *Eye-sight*, though he knows it to be *Scripture*. But I shall only refer the Reader for this to 2 *Sam.* vi.

Moses had left in solemn Charge, that this People should never make War with the *Edomites*, because *Edom* was their Brother; and in all the Wars of the *Judges*, while this People were continually conquered by, and enslaved to, some of the neighbouring Nations or other, as the *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, *Midianites*, &c. we do not find that they had any War with *Edom*, or that the *Idumeans* had ever attacked them, or joined in the Wars against them with

with the other Nations. Yet as ſoon as *David* had an Opportunity, and in the midſt of his rapid bloody Conqueſts, he deſtroyed this noble merchandizing Nation. He ſawed them aſunder, and left none of them, but what could ſave themſelves by Flight, and ſuch was the Slaughter in *Idumea*, that *Joab* was ſix Months in burying the Dead. And for this very Reaſon he was forbid to build the Houſe which he had projected, a Houſe for *God to dwell in*, becauſe after he had been raiſed from the Dunghil or *Sheep-fold*, he had been a *Man of Blood*, or a cruel relentleſs Tyrant.

This good King ſeems to have died as he lived, a Spectacle of Truth, Juſtice, and peculiar Sanctity. The 38th Pſalm may be reckoned his laſt penitential Hymn, and he was then, I doubt not, a true Penitent. He deſcribes, as his own Caſe, a Diſtemper which is now but too well known, eſpecially in this great City. *O! Lord rebuke me not in thine Anger, neither chaſten me in thy ſore Diſpleaſure. Thine Arrows ſtick in my Fleſh, and thy Hand lieth upon me. There is no Soundneſs in my Fleſh, becauſe of thine Anger, neither is there Reſt in my Bones, becauſe of my Sin. Mine Iniquities are gone over my Head, and as a weighty Burden they are too heavy for me. My Wounds are putrified and corrupt, becauſe of my Fooliſhneſs. I am bowed and crooked, very ſore, I go mourning all the Day, for my Reins are full of burning, and there is nothing ſound in my Fleſh. I am weakened and ſore broken, I roar for the very Grief*

of

of my Heart.——My Lovers and my Friends keep out of my Plague, and my Kinſmen ſtand afar off. See *Pſal.* xxxviii. As I take this to be *David*'s laſt penitential Pſalm, I ſhall leave our learned Author to publiſh a Volume of Sermons upon it, as he finds Occaſion. But I hope he will not allegorize it all, and ſay, that this was the State not of his *Body* but *Soul.* This Sort of Lues is ſtill contagious, and often epidemical in ſeveral Parts of the *Spaniſh Weſt-Indies*, without any Thing of Venereal Contact: And any one that reads and conſiders the Account *Moſes* has given of the *Plague of Leproſy*, muſt ſee that it was Venereal. In ſhort, *David* was a Man of a very great and uncommon Genius in Poetry, Muſic, and the Art of Diſſimulation; he was perfidious in his Friendſhip, and implacable in his Enmity, his Revenge was inexorable, his Amours baſe and ſhameleſs, and it may be truly ſaid of him, that he never ſpared a Man in his Anger, nor a Woman in his Luſt. He had nothing of the manly Bravery of a Soldier, but owed all his Victories and Succeſſes to *Joab*; but under any Difficulties or Diſtreſs, diſcovered his own Fearfulneſs, Effeminacy, and Cowardiſe, to which his Cruelty was equal, whenever he had got an Enemy in his Power; and as all his Conqueſts had been very rapid and bloody, ſo after his Death they were as ſoon loſt as they had been gained. In his higheſt Flights of Devotion, and in the Hymns which he compoſed and ſet to the Muſic of the Temple, he interſperſes the

the moſt direful Curſes and Imprecations of Vengeance upon his Enemies, and made his own Quarrel always the Cauſe of God, which ſhews the Rancour and Venom of his Soul, to have been equal to the Malignity of that Humour that preyed on his Body. That this was his uniform Character, I think, is very plain from the whole Courſe of the Story, and from every remarkable Tranſaction of his Reign. Our Author indeed gives this Prince a quite different Character, and throughout the greater Part of his 9th Chapter, extols him to the Skies, as the Mirror of Truth, Juſtice, and Piety. But his Character ſeems defective and ſuſpicious in this, that it is not ſupported by any Facts, unleſs we muſt take *David*'s own Word for it, and his ſolemn Proteſtations of his own Juſtice and Integrity, when ſome open notorious Piece of Wickedneſs had thrown him into a Fit of Devotion, of which his Elegy on *Saul*, among many others, is a remarkable Inſtance. I have been the more particular on *David*'s Life and Character, becauſe I find he is the *Saint-Errant* of ſpiritual Scholaſtics, and *School-Divinity*, it ſeems, cannot ſtand without him. But I hope to ſhew that *Chriſtianity* can be no Loſer by this.

SECT.

SECT. VII.

The Case of the Prophets farther considered, and the Author's pretended Vindication of their false Principles, and wrong Conduct in several Instances, exposed and confuted. A particular Account of the Civil Wars between the two Kingdoms, and how they were fomented and carried on.

THE Author in his tenth Chapter comes to examine the Account which I had given of the Prophets, and their Struggles all along to recover the revolted Tribes, and bring back the People to the legal Priesthood. But he does it in such a tedious Way of Pulpit-haranguing, that it is difficult to trace his Argument, or to find out where it is, that he would lay the Stress of it.

The Author, through this Chapter, labours to make his Reader believe that the *Prophets* were no *Politicians*, and that they had no Concern at all in any of the great Revolutions in the Kingdom, from the Revolt of the Ten Tribes to the *Assyrian* Captivity, any farther than by declaring to the People what they had received by immediate Inspiration from God. He has undertaken to defend *immediate Inspiration* against all the Principles of *human Policy*, the visible

viſible State of a Nation, and the neceſſary Reaſons of State, which muſt in the natural Courſe of Things bring about ſuch and ſuch Revolutions. He can ſee nothing in Scripture, but through his Glaſſes, but could he lay aſide theſe a little, and truſt to his own natural Eye-ſight, I might have the leſs Trouble with him for the future.

How the State of the Kingdom ſtood during the Reign of *Solomon*, and at his Death, I have ſhewn already; and that the Burden of the legal Prieſthood, together with the Weight of the Crown, could then no longer be born. For when the Church had an annual Rent, or a third Part of the whole Produce of the Lands by Law, and the King wanted another, it was impoſſible the People ſhould live, but under the utmoſt Hardſhips and Diſtreſs. Such a Revolution therefore, at that Time, was unavoidable in the natural Courſe of Things, and either the prieſtly or regal Power muſt ſink. This the Prophets knew, and therefore concerted the Revolution with *Jeroboam*, as I have ſhewn. They thought, no doubt, by this Means to bring back the Kingdom of *David* to the legal Conſtitution, and force them to ſubmit themſelves again to the *Moſaic* Prieſthood; and therefore declared that this Revolt of the Kingdom was only to laſt for a Time, and then be reſtored to the ſame Family again. But in this they were miſtaken, and were never able to bring it about, though they ſpared no Effuſion of Royal Blood to that Purpoſe.

But

But I have ſet this Matter in ſo clear a Light already, that I dare truſt the Reader with it, who can ſee without our Author's Glaſſes.

He denies that *Solomon* during his whole Reign was in Alliance with *Egypt*, though he had married the King's Daughter, and had all his Horſes and Chariots from thence. And he might as well have denied that he was in Alliance with the *Zidonians*, who built the Temple, and manned his Fleets for him; or that he kept Peace and Alliance with all the Nations his Father had conquered, and ſuffered their Kings to be reſtored without ever fighting a Battle to retain any of thoſe Conqueſts. But this Writer takes it as a general Rule to contradict me, and whether right or wrong, is no Matter.

But *Solomon* knew very well that the Way to true Glory, and to ſtrengthen his Kingdom, was to maintain Peace at Home by good Alliances with the neighbouring Nations. And to encourage Foreigners to come and ſettle in the Country, he granted a general Indulgence, or Toleration, with Regard to Prieſthood and Sacrifices, that every one, without Moleſtation, might take their own Way. It was this which enraged the Prophets, and made them turn their Heads more than ever to Politics. They were reſolved either to reſtore and guard the legal Prieſthood, or deſtroy the Crown, though they happened to deſtroy both. But I muſt take ſome Notice of ſeveral Things which this Author has offered with Regard to the Obſervations

vations I had made concerning the Temper and Conduct of the Prophets, after this great Revolution and Diviſion of the Kingdom.

It is certain, that after this great Revolution and Diviſion of the Kingdom, there were nine ſuch Revolutions in 240 Years, in which one Royal Family, with all their Friends and Adherents, were cut off, by popular Outrage and Fury, to make Way for another, who ſtill governed upon the ſame Principles of Toleration. But can it be conceived, or ſuppoſed, that God would do this immediately, and without any Regard to the Event? Would he for 240 Years together have ſet aſide one idolatrous Family by mere popular Rage, Rebellion, and Murder, to make Way for a worſe, and to ſtrengthen Idolatry ſtill more and more? It is very plain from the whole Story, that the Prophets were deeply concerned in all this, and that they inſpired the People from Time to Time with ſuch Outrage and Madneſs, by their pretended Declarations from God, as in the Caſes of *Jeroboam*, *Baaſha*, *Ahab*, and *Jehu*. Theſe ſpiritual Politicians might think, by making ſuch Examples, to force the Kings of *Iſrael* at length to quite their Idolatry, and re-unite themſelves to the Kings of *Judah*, or Houſe of *David*: But ſurely God himſelf could not be ſo much miſtaken. And there is not one Inſtance in any of theſe Caſes, which this Author has offered, to prove an immediate Commiſſion and Revelation from God, but what the Thing itſelf ſpeaks the contrary.

Page 308. the Author repreſents me as juſtifying *Jezebel* in deſtroying the Prophets of the Lord, and condemning *Elijah* for deſtroying *Baal*'s Prophets. But I had juſtified or approved of neither. I had obſerved indeed, that theſe Prophets of the Lord would never ſuffer any other Prophets or Prieſts to live, but ſuch as were of their own Religion, whenever they had it in their Power to deſtroy them. And that conſequently they could not pretend to any Right to Toleration themſelves, when a Government was againſt them. It is certain that theſe Prophets of the Lord, as he implicitly calls them, had ever acted upon the Principles of Perſecution, and their very Conſtitution and Profeſſion were ſuch. But that God had inſtituted ſuch a Scheme of Perſecution, Superſtition, and falſe Religion, though he continually ſuppoſes and takes for granted, is what he cannot prove, and he ſeems to be very conſcious of his Inability in the Caſe. For otherwiſe why does he not name ſome of thoſe mutable and varying Circumſtances, which muſt have altered the eternal, immutable Law of Nature, Reaſon of Things, and Moral Perfections of God, with Regard to that particular People and State? Why does he not ſhew that Superſtition and falſe Religion, in all other Caſes, may be true Religion and divine Inſtitution under a Theocracy, or where himſelf is the immediate Lawgiver and Governor. If his Argument proves any Thing, it muſt prove that Perſecution and Superſtition is true Re-

ligion, and moſt agreeable to the Will of God, ſince he inſtituted this among his own peculiar People, while he himſelf was King and God of *Iſrael*. But the *Jewiſh* Prieſthood and Sacrifices never were, and never can be, the true Religion, or the Worſhip of the true God. And muſt not this Writer's Argument for Superſtition and falſe Religion, as Matter of immediate divine Inſtitution, hold as good in the Mouth of any other Perſecutor, or Advocate and Patron of Superſtition? As much as this Law was ever in force, it muſt be in force ſtill, for if ever it was divinely inſtituted, I challenge him to ſhew me the Repeal. But this he cannot do, and yet he thinks Perſecution and Superſtition muſt be defended in Support of *Chriſtianity*.

When an immediate Commiſſion for doing a Thing is pretended to from God, any Man, who would guard himſelf againſt the groſſeſt Impoſture and Deluſion, would conſider the Nature of the Thing itſelf, or how far it is agreeable to the certain rational Notions we have of God, and his natural and moral Perfections. Without this there is no Impoſture or Deception which a Man might not, or muſt not, be liable to: But our Author is for taking a quite contrary Method, and for judging of Mens Commiſſion and Authority from God by their own Pretenſions to it and Declarations concerning it. But I preſume he would not thus take the Words of *Zoroaſter* or *Makomet*, though he might as well do this in one Caſe as

another, had he no particular Prejudice or Bias on one Side more than the other. The very Miracles upon which he believes the divine Authority of *Moſes*, would be ſo many plain convincing Reaſons againſt it, had he found any ſuch Stories and Accounts of Things in the *Perſian Zerduſht*, or *Mahometan Koran*; and thus kiſſing goes by Favour, and the Proof of one Revelation ſhall deſtroy the Credit of another. And had not our Author taken this Privilege, he muſt certainly have ſuppreſſed a great Part of his Book, and deprived the World of ſuch a Collection and Digeſt of his Sermons. But, *Page* 318, he ſays, *The Queſtion remains, what Proof is there that God did indeed ſend the Prophet to anoint* Jehu, *and that all this was done by the divine Order and Appointment?* This is indeed the moſt material Queſtion that could have been put, and therefore I wondered to ſee him put it. But the Matter it ſeems is as clear as Day-light. For theſe two Prophets *Elijah* and *Eliſha*, *as an Atteſtation of their divine Miſſion, were enabled to work more and greater Miracles than had been wrought in ſeveral hundred Years before.* But in the firſt Place, he cannot prove the certain Truth of the Facts, but muſt take them intirely upon Truſt from the Hiſtorian. And then theſe Miracles, ſuppoſing them real, were not wrought to prove the Infallibility of the Hiſtorian, nor the Infallibility of the Prophet, nor his particular Commiſſion to anoint *Jehu*, and ſet him about ſuch unnatural bloody Work as

he did. So that this Writer has here proved nothing but his own *Credulity*, and his Inclination to have proved more, if he could. We know very well, that falſe Prophets and the greateſt Impoſtors may work Miracles, ſo as, if poſſible, to *deceive the very Elect*. How does this Writer know by any outward ſenſible Appearance, how extraordinary ſoever, that it denotes any divine Commiſſion, or is intended as an Atteſtation to any Thing from God, without conſidering the Nature, Reaſon, and Tendency of the Thing itſelf? If he has any ſuch Rule, let him communicate the Secret, and not write ſo much like a Prophet himſelf.

Page 421, the Author comes to the Point of *Hazael*, the chief Captain of the King of *Syria*, and the Management between the Prophet *Eliſha* and him, which he ſays, *Is from the Beginning to the End one entire Miſrepreſentation, as any one will find by the Account given in the Place, which he himſelf refers to*, 2 Kings viii. 7. I am willing to abide by the Hiſtorian's own Account of this Matter in the Place referred to. I had ſuppoſed that 40 Camels Load of the richeſt Goods in *Syria* might be a Bribe to a poor Prophet, as it was ſufficient to have bribed any Prince then in the World. But I did not, it ſeems, ſay *what this Bribe was given for, or what could be* Hazael's *View in it*. But I thought I had told this, and I am perſwaded that this Writer is the only Man that ever miſtook it. The King bid the Captain take a Preſent, and go and enquire of the *Man*

of God about his Health, whether he ſhould recover or no, but he did not bid him take ſuch a Preſent as 40 Camels Load, *&c.* It cannot be thought that a Servant would give ſuch a Preſent to a Prophet without his Maſter's Knowledge, without ſome extraordinary View in it, or that the Prophet who took the Bribe ſhould be ſo dull as not to ſee the Deſign of it. And therefore the Prophet, though he told the Captain that his Maſter's Diſtemper was not in itſelf mortal, but that he might recover; yet God had ſhewed him, that he, *Hazael*, ſhould be King of *Syria*; and this could be done no other Way, but by diſpatching the King, whoſe Diſeaſe was not otherwiſe mortal. This Method the aſpiring Captain took, and ſo came to the Kingdom by divine Authority, after he had murdered his Maſter. *But was it in the Power of* Eliſha *to ſet whom he pleaſed upon the Throne of* Syria? No, but it was in his Power to ſet an ambitious Servant into the right Way of obtaining the Crown by Treachery and Murder, and this he did, after he had compounded with him, as he thought, for the Peace of his own Country, but in this he was miſtaken. He pretends that the Prophet very well knew that *Hazael* would prove a greater Plague to *Iſrael*, than all the Kings of *Syria* that had gone before him. But how does it appear that the Prophet *very well knew this?* He feared it indeed, but, upon *Hazael*'s ſolemn Declarations to the contrary, he believed otherwiſe before he gave him that Hint, or put him into a Way of crowning his

his Wiſhes, by diſpatching his Maſter, when he had told him before, that the Diſeaſe was not mortal, and that the King *might live*. But if this Prophet, who knew every Thing, had known what *Hazael* would do in ſuch a Caſe, and did not adviſe him againſt it, he was certainly guilty of the Murder. Nor can all the Criticiſm in the World make any one believe, who will but read and conſider the Story, that the Prophet did not deſign the Event as it happened, and put the Captain into the Way of it, after he had taken his ſolemn Vows and Proteſtations, that, in ſuch a Caſe, he would be favourable to *Iſrael*. But this Prophet having taken his Reward before-hand, could have no good Reaſon to expect the Performance of Promiſes afterward; and had he known what would have happened from *Hazael*'s being King of *Syria*, he muſt have been the foul Betrayer of his Country, to tell the Captain that God had ſhewed him that he ſhould be King, though his Maſter's Diſtemper was not mortal. For nothing I think can be more evident than this, that, in ſuch a Caſe, no plainer Hint or Direction for Murder could have been given. And this Prophet's taking ſo rich a Bribe, or Preſent, if he will, was a plain Proof that he had an Intereſt to make with the Captain, and that he was not abſolutely abſtracted from the World. But this Writer ſeems to care for nothing elſe, if he could but prove that the Prophet had the certain Fore-knowledge of Things to come. For

this muſt be by *immediate Inſpiration from God.* And yet this is a groſs Paralogiſm, unleſs he could prove that all Fore-knowledge muſt be from God immediately, and that the Devil, or evil Spirits, can fore-know nothing that we are ignorant of. All *Fore-knowledge* with this Writer is *divine Inſpiration*, though he knows not what to do with it when he has got it.

The Shift this Author makes to get off with *Jeroboam*'s proſperous Reign, who was as great an Idolater as any of the Kings that went before him, is the moſt miſerable that ever I met with. I had given the true Reaſon, but this Writer coins one. The Reign of *Jeroboam* the Second had been a long, proſperous, and glorious Reign, though he had encouraged and ſupported the ſame Idolatry with *Jeroboam* the Firſt, the Son of *Nebat*, who made *Iſrael* to ſin, and who firſt introduced the Worſhip of Idols under the Countenance and Protection of the Regal Power. This Sort of Idolatry was charged upon all the Kings of *Iſrael* afterward, and particularly upon this King. And from hence I had ſaid, that this King was as great an Encourager of Idolatry as any that had gone before him. But this, ſaith our Author, *is not true, for he*, Jeroboam *the Second, only followed the Sin of* Jeroboam, *the Son of* Nebat, *which conſiſted in worſhipping the true God after a wrong Manner; whereas the Houſe of* Ahab *had introduced the Worſhip of* Baal, and the Heathen Deities, which *was an expreſs and*

open

open revolting from the God of Iſrael. One would think by this, that there had been two Sorts of Idolatry in *Iſrael*; the one conſiſting in an innocent Kind of Idolatry, or only worſhipping the true God in a wrong Way, which was the Sin of *Jeroboam* the Firſt, who had introduced Idolatry, and with which the Idolatry of the very worſt of their Kings had been branded for ever after. But *Ahab* brought in another Sort of Idolatry, which conſiſted in the Worſhip of other Gods, as ſupreme, and rejecting the true God altogether. This was our Author's Imagination, or at leaſt the Shift he was put to. But there is nothing in it. The Idolatry of the Heathens was all of the ſame Kind, the Worſhip of God by the Mediation of ſubordinate, national, reſidential, and tutelar Deities. This Idolatry was all ſubordinate, mediatorial Worſhip; for none of the Heathens were ever ſo abſurd, as to imagine their Idols, or tutelar national Gods, to be the Supreme God himſelf, or the Creators of Heaven and Earth. *Jeroboam* the Firſt ſet up the Calves, which were the *Egyptian* tutelar Gods; but *Ahab* introduced the Worſhip of *Baalim*, which were the *Phœnician* or *Zidonian* tutelar Gods. But that the Gods of *Egypt* and *Zidon*, and the Gods of *Jeroboam* the Firſt and Second, were not Gods of the ſame Nature and Kind, or the tutelar Gods of different Nations, is this Writer's mere Imagination. He would have it thought too, that the Worſhip of the *Zidonian* Gods, under *Ahab* and his Family, had

had been eſtabliſhed more than the Worſhip of the *Egyptian* and *Aſſyrian* Gods had been before, and after, under the two *Jeroboams*; but this is likewiſe mere Romance and Invention.

Towards the Cloſe of this Chapter, he comes to conſider what I had ſaid about the War between the two Houſes of *Judah* and *Iſrael* after the Revolt. I muſt own that I had made *Judah* firſt Aggreſſor in this War, and ſuppoſed that they had the chief Hand in carrying it on, under the Direction of the Prophets, up and down for 200 Years. But I muſt conſider what he has offered to the contrary; and as he repreſents what I aſſerted as all Forgery and falſe Hiſtory, from one End to the other, I have the more Reaſon to examine the Merits of the Cauſe.

Before *Jeroboam* had ſet up Idolatry in his Kingdom, the Prophets were in his Intereſt; and when *Rehoboam* had raiſed an Army againſt him of 180000 choſen Men, to reduce the revolted Tribes to his Obedience, the Prophets declared againſt the War, and told *Rehoboam*, that what had been done was from the Lord, *i. e.* by their Direction: But as ſoon as *Jeroboam* had ſet up the Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, the Prophets immediately brought on a War upon him, and ſent one of their Number, a Prophet, to declare War againſt him, and Deſtruction to his Houſe. And from hence it is evident, that the Prophets had Peace or War in their Power, and that being looked upon as

the

the Mouth of God to the People, they could work them up at any time into what Temper they pleaſed. The War thus entered upon, continued between the two Houſes all the Days of *Jeroboam*, *Nadab*, and *Baaſha*, the three firſt Kings of *Iſrael*, which was 48 Years. But the Prophets now ſaw that it would be impoſſible for *Judah* ever to reduce *Iſrael* to their Obedience by their own Strength; and therefore *Aſa*, King of *Judah*, is put upon making an Alliance with *Benhadad*, King of *Syria*, for the utter Deſtruction of the revolted Kingdom. *Then Aſa took that was left in the Treaſures of the Houſe of the Lord, and the Treaſures of the King's Houſe, and delivered them into the Hands of his Servants: and King Aſa ſent them to Benhadad the Son of Tabrimon, the Son of Hezion, King of Aram, that dwelt at Damaſcus.*—— *So Benhadad hearkened unto King Aſa, and ſent the Captains of the Hoſts which he had, againſt the Cities of Iſrael*, &c. 1 *King.* xv. 18—20. In conſequence of this Alliance the whole Power of *Syria* was turned againſt *Iſrael* for 120 Years together. During the Courſe of this War, the Prophets could ſave their Men of *Judah*, in great meaſure, as having now engaged a foreign idolatrous Power to do their Work for them, to root out Idolatry at home. By this Alliance, which the Prophets of the Lord approved of, and juſtified in *Aſa*, the Kingdom of *Iſrael* had been almoſt entirely extirpated and deſtroyed: For towards the End of this long and bloody War, the whole Kingdom of *Iſrael* could

could raiſe but 50 Horſe, 10 Chariots, and 10000 Foot, the *Aramites* having *crumbled them as Duſt on the Ground*, 2 King xiii. 7. whereas at the firſt Diviſion of the Kingdom they could bring into the Field againſt *Judah* 800000 Men, 2 *Chron.* xiii. 3. The good King *Aſa*, who entered into this Alliance with the idolatrous *Syrians*, for the Deſtruction of the greateſt and beſt Part of his own Country, is extolled to the Heavens by the Hiſtorians, who were the Prophets themſelves: And yet *Jehoſaphat*, who followed the Advice of the Prophets in moſt Things, is cenſured and condemned by them, for entering into an Alliance with *Ahab*, in Defence of his Country. Nothing certainly could be more natural, or juſt, than for the two Kingdoms to unite againſt a common Enemy; and yet this raiſed the whole Poſſe of the Prophets to give the King of *Aram* the Victory, when the Kings of *Iſrael* and *Judah* were both joined in Battle againſt them. Upon this Occaſion, 400 Prophets of the Lord were called together, and conſulted by the two Kings; who, all to a Man, agreed in adviſing them to the Battle, and promiſing Victory. But *Micaiah*, another Prophet of the Lord, being called in, diſſented from all the reſt, and aſſured the two Kings, that if they engaged with the *Aramites* at that time their Armies would be routed. This Writer has the Front to ſay, that the 400 Prophets, who propheſied falſely, were not Prophets of the Lord: but if he credits the Hiſtorian, he muſt ſee that they were Prophets of the

the Lord, and that the Lord himſelf, in this Caſe, had deceived them, by ſending out a lying Spirit among them, with a Commiſſion to give them a falſe Viſion for the Deſtruction of *Ahab:* For all this, let the Reader turn to the twenty-ſecond Chapter of the Firſt of *Kings.* I might produce many Paſſages from theſe Hiſtorians, to ſhew that it was an eſtabliſhed Maxim among them, that *if a Prophet was deceived, the Lord had deceived that Prophet:* And therefore, as their Predictions did not always come to paſs, and they were often out in their Gueſſes, they frequently repreſent God as repenting, changing his Mind, and altering his Purpoſes, upon ſomething or other which afterwards happened, and which theſe prophetic Viſionaries could not foreſee. And this Writer might as well contradict the whole Story and ſay, that the Prieſts of *Iſrael* were not the *Lord's Prieſts,* as that the Prophets were not the *Lord's Prophets*; becauſe, perhaps, not one in five hundred of either was a wiſe or honeſt Man; but yet they all equally ſtood upon a divine Inſtitution, and were choſen, inducted, and continued, according to the original Rules and Methods of their reſpective Orders, as God himſelf was ſuppoſed to have preſcribed them. I know not whether all, or any thing of this will convince our Author, that the Prophets were at the Bottom of all thoſe violent Commotions and bloody Revolutions in the State; but I believe any Man muſt ſee this who will read the Hiſtory with his own

own natural Eye-ſight, and without ſyſtematical Spectacles.

As ſoon as the *Syrian* Arms had been divided, that they could no longer join with *Judah* in deſtroying *Iſrael*, the War was ſtill carried on by *Judah* alone, but not with equal Advantage; for *Joaſh*, King of *Iſrael*, entirely routed *Amazia*, King of *Judah*, took the King Priſoner, razed to the Ground the Walls of of *Jeruſalem*, and took, and carried off with him, all the Riches and Treaſures of the Temple. I place this in the 150th Year of the Revolt; during which Time the War had continued between the two Houſes at very ſhort Intervals. But thus ended this long and bloody War, with all the Projects and Politics of the *Naioth* Prophets; the Walls of *Jeruſalem* were now levelled with the Ground, and the Temple robbed and ſpoiled of all its Riches and Glory; *Judah* and her Prophets had loſt their faithful Friends and Allies, the idolatrous *Aramites*, and muſt now fall a Victim to the idolatrous *Iſraelites*, againſt whom the War had been undertaken, and the bloody Scene thus far carried on in the *Name of the Lord:* But let any Man read this whole Story, from the Revolt of the ten Tribes to the Time of *Jeroboam* the Second, and then tell me whether God, in his Providence, was not wiſer and more juſt than theſe Prophets; or whether Providence had not, from Time to Time, baffled and confounded all their Politics?

To *Joaſh* ſucceeded *Jeroboam* his Son. He had a long and proſperous Reign of 41 Years; *Judah* lay now entirely at the Mercy of *Iſrael*; *Jeruſalem* had been laid open, and the Temple ſtripped and left naked; and had *Jeroboam* now taken the ſame Method with *Judah*, as they had all along with *Iſrael*, he might have utterly extirpated and deſtroyed them: But inſtead of this, he contented himſelf with recovering all that the *Aramites* had taken from them in their Alliance with *Judah*, and extending his Conqueſts much further againſt *Syria*, without making any Reprizals upon his prophetic Country-men. *Judah* and the whole Nation now ſaw the Prophets had not been infallible, nor their Meaſures right.

Jeroboam died in the Year of the Revolt 193. After which ſuch was the Confuſion of the Nation, that there appears to have been an Interregnum of 14 Years before his Son came to the Throne; where he ſat but three Months before he was mudered by *Shallum*; who after one Month's Reign was murdered by *Menahem*. This was in the 280th Year of the Revolt, or 772 Years before the Chriſtian Æra. At this very Time, *Pul*, King of *Aſſyria*, invaded *Paleſtine*, and *Menahem* raiſed a Contribution for him of a thouſand Talents, and ſo became his Vaſſal and Tributary, to put himſelf under his Protection. This *Pul* accepted of, and took upon him the Protection of *Iſrael* againſt *Judah*, or any other Adverſaries, 2 *King.* xv. 19, 20. From this Time both Kingdoms became ſubject

and

and tributary to the *Aſſyrians*, who had entirely broke the Power of *Syria* before, and made themſelves Maſters of all the Weſtern *Aſia*: and now there was no farther Occaſion for a War between the two Houſes, or for ſettling true Religion among themſelves by Force of Arms, ſince the Influence of the *Naioth* Prophets, and their Scheme of Politics were now at an end. But *Menahem* reigned 10 Years, and his Son *Pekahiah*, who ſucceeded him, two Years, and was then murdered by *Pekah*, the Captain of the Hoſt, who reigned 20 Years; he was then ſlain by *Hoſhea*, who after a nine Years Interregnum came to the Crown; and in the ninth Year of his Reign, *Shalmaneſer* came up and deſtroyed *Samaria*, and led the Remainder of the People into Captivity. But about 24 Years before this, in the Days of *Pekah*, King of *Iſrael*, *Tiglath-pileſer*, the Father of *Shalmaneſer*, had laid waſte, and captivated all the North-Eaſt Part of the Country to within 50 Miles of *Samaria*, as appears from the Account given of this firſt Captivity under *Tiglath-pileſer*, 2 King. xv. 29. This firſt Captivity I place in the Year of the Revolt 234, and the laſt in the Year 258. In which Computation I cannot be miſtaken above two or three Years, off or on, as to the firſt Captivity, but the latter is more certain, and agreed upon in Chronology. The Reaſon of this firſt Captivity of *Iſrael* was, that *Pekah* had made an Alliance with *Rezin*, King of *Aram*, againſt *Judah*, who was then under the *Aſſyrian* Protection. And four or five Years after

after this, the ſame *Tiglath-pileſer* came up and deſtroyed *Damaſcus*, and thereby entirely diſſolved the Weſtern *Syrian* Empire.

The Prophets which Providence raiſed up under theſe Commotions, had learned more Wiſdom and Moderation by Experience than the former Prophets had ever diſcovered. They ſaw plainly that the Idolatry of their Kings had not been the only nor chief Cauſe of their national Calamities; they ſaw that their moſt idolatrous Kings had often had the beſt Succeſs, and the moſt proſperous Reigns, and that God had not wrought Miracles, as had been expected, for ſupporting the true Religion by Force of Arms. They therefore exhorted the Kings and People to ſubmit peaceably to the conquering Powers, and to amend and reform their Lives and Manners; to leave off their Swearing, Drunkenneſs, and Whoredom, and to reform the groſs Bribery and Corruption that prevailed among them from the higheſt to the loweſt, and of which the Nation in general was guilty, not only the Commonalty, but even their Prieſts and Prophets, Magiſtrates and Judges. They repreſented this as the moſt likely Way to procure the Protection of Providence, and not their continual Rebellions and Revolts from the conquering idolatrous Nations, and the Expectation of Miracles for their Deliverance. But before this, we had heard of no other Cauſe of their Miſeries and Calamities, but the Idolatry of their Kings, who indulged their Subjects in obſerving the Sacrifices and Feſtivals of other Na-

tions, which drew off the People from the Prieſts of the Lord. But I have ſhewn the Revenues of theſe holy Prieſts, as ſettled by Law, were grown inſufferable, and that it was impoſſible to pay them their legal Demands, and ſupport the Weight of the Crown too: Nor will any wiſe Prince ever encourage ſuch vaſt and enormous Church-Revenues, which muſt be all exempted from the national Service and Defence, as well as the Perſons to whom they are paid.

I have been the more particular upon all this, to let the Reader ſee the Juſtice and Candour of this ſyſtematical Divine while he is triumphing through all the former Part of his 11th Chapter, as if I had denied the Attempts of theſe new reforming Prophets, or had not ſufficiently pointed out the Time in which they lived. It is evident, that *Iſaiah*, *Hoſea*, and *Micah*, were all contemporary, that they all propheſied under the *Aſſyrian* Conqueſts, and that they were all living and propheſying at the laſt *Aſſyrian* Captivity. But perhaps this Maſter of Hiſtory and Chronology did not know that there had been any *Aſſyrian* Captivity before *Hoſea*'s Time, when the *Aſſyrian* Conqueſts began, or when the *Naioth* Prophets, or *Samueline* Society, with their Schools, were diſcarded and ſet aſide.

But the Author ſoon ſhews more of his Learning and Knowledge in Hiſtory, by repreſenting it as a *very abſurd Thing*, that the *Jews* ſhould quit their Idolatry, and take up with their later Notions in Religion from the *idolatrous* Perſians,

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the Adorers of the Sun and of Fire. But it is certainly a very ſtrange thing, that a Man who would be thought learned, and to be acquainted with Hiſtory, at this time of Day, ſhould believe this groundleſs Story and Abuſe of the *Perſians*; a Calumny which had been caſt upon them by ſome *Greek* Hiſtorians, who knew nothing of the *Perſians* or their Religion: But Dr *Hyde*, *de Relig. Veter. Perſar.* has fully refuted this, ſhewn the Ground of the Miſtake, and proved, beyond all Contradiction, that the *Medes* and *Perſians*, from their very firſt Records, had been never Idolaters, but had always kept to the Worſhip of the true God; and it is well known in Hiſtory, that the *Perſians*, while their Empire laſted, deſtroyed all the idolatrous Temples, and *Sabean* Worſhip, both in *Aſia* and *Greece*, ſo far as they could come: And there are many Paſſages in *Iſaiah*, which refer to this Downfal and Deſtruction of all the Temples and Idols of the antient *Aſſyrians* and *Babylonians*. The *Perſians* had purged all *Aſia* of Idolatry, and kept it out for about 200 Years, during their Monarchy, though it broke in again like a Deluge, and the antient Gods of *Egypt* were again reſtored by the *Greek* Conqueſt of *Aſia*. Theſe are no new Diſcoveries; it is what this Author himſelf muſt have known, had he conſulted Hiſtory and Chronology ſo much as he has his Syſtem; and had he only conſidered what Dean *Prideaux* himſelf has given us out of Dr *Hyde*, concerning *Zoroaſter* and the *Perſian* Religion, he muſt have ſeen that the *Per-*

ſians were no Idolaters. *Zoroaſter* taught the Doctrines of one God, and of a general Judgment, and future State of Rewards and Puniſhments, as plainly and expreſsly as Chriſt and the Apoſtles did 400 Years after. But *Zoroaſter* did not pretend to introduce theſe Doctrines as a new Revelation to himſelf, for it had always been the Religion of the *Perſians* many hundred Years before him, and during the whole Courſe of the *Aſſyrian* and *Babylonian* Monarchies.

Zoroaſter, as all the *Perſian* and *Arabic* Writers agree, had been a Servant, in his younger Years, to the Prophet *Eſdras*, not *Ezra* the Scribe. And in the ſecond Book of *Eſdras*, theſe Doctrines are as clearly and expreſsly taught, and the Difficulties of Providence as rationally and ſolidly accounted for upon this Principle, as in any Part of the New Teſtament. The 24th and 25th Chapters of St *Matthew*'s Goſpel, is a plain Tranſcript out of this Prophet, and a great part of it almoſt *verbatim*. It would be eaſy to prove, that the Prophet *Daniel* lived pretty late under the *Perſian* Monarchy, and not above one Generation earlier than *Eſdras*: but, perhaps, this Writer does not know, that after the *Babylonian*, there was a *Perſian* Captivity of twice 70 Years; during which time the *Jews* had been ſcattered and diſperſed all over the *Perſian* Dominions, and that their City and Temple, built after their Return from *Babylon*, had, under this ſecond Captivity, been entirely burnt, deſtroyed, and laid in Rubbiſh and Ruins. But I ſhould be loth to enter into

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any Hiſtorical or Chronological Diſputes with this learned Writer, who, ſeems to be ſo perfectly well qualified for it.

I muſt therefore conclude, that the *Jews* quitted their Idolatry while they were ſubject to the *Perſians*; during which Time, of upward of 200 Years, they could not have been indulged or tolerated in any ſort of Idolatry, had they been ever ſo much inclined to it; and from this People they muſt have taken their Notions of a general Judgment, a Reſurrection of the Body, and a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments, ſince from this Time their Books and Writings are clear and expreſs as to thoſe Doctrines; whereas before we find nothing of it even in their moſt reforming Prophets, without torturing and ſtraining the Text into it, and uſing a Violence which would not be thought fair in interpreting any other Writings. In ſhort, every Word this Author has ſaid about the *Perſian* and *Magian* Religion is falſe. It is not true, that they made two independent Principles, a good and a bad, and worſhipped both, or that they worſhipped either the Sun or Fire. Their Notion of the two Principles was no other than the current Doctrine among *Jews* and *Chriſtians* concerning God and the Devil; they always maintained, that the good Principle would at laſt prevail and deſtroy the evil one, together with the Darkneſs, which had been his Seat and Abode; and that after this, celeſtial Light and Glory would eternally take Place among all the Creatures of God. And this was the

true Doctrine of the *Manichees* afterwards, tho' Mr *Bayle* has misrepresented it, for no other Reason that I can see, but to try what he could say for the greatest Absurdity that could ever be supposed, or entred into any Man's Head: Nor did they worship the Sun or Fire, or any Thing but the true *God*. They worshipped God, or invoked the supreme Being, towards the Sun or Fire, as looking upon it to be the best sensible Emblem or Representation of his Power and Presence; and this made some of the *Greeks*, who knew nothing at all of their Religion, conclude that they worshipped the Sun and Fire: and Dr *Hyde* has so fully cleared up this, that if this Author has read him, as he seems to refer to him, his Misrepresentation of this Matter must be inexcusable. *Zoroaster* taught, that the Punishment of the Wicked would only be between Death and the Resurrection; at which Time he supposed that, being throughly purged and cleansed from their Sins, they would be restored to Happiness. And this was a Doctrine infinitely more humane, than the Opinion of those who will have no Religion, if they cannot establish the eternal Dominion of the Devil in Hell, over the far greater Part of God's Creatures. Nothing less than such eternal, implacable, and inexorable Revenge could satisfy the Malice of the *Jews*; but herein they worshipped the Devil more effectually than ever the *Persians* did. But I hope this Writer in Defence of Judaism will not justify Diabolism;

and yet I know not what he might do in Oppoſiton to me.

But after all, the wiſeſt and beſt of the Moraliſts and Reformers among the Prophets, who lived before the *Perſian* Empire, ſpeak not one Word of the Reſurrection of the Body, or a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments, and therefore whatever Doctrines of Moral Truth and Righteouſneſs they might preach, they never urged or inforced them under the proper Motives and Sanctions of Religion. This Author's Attempt to prove the contrary, in a tedious Harangue of ſeven or eight Pages at the Cloſe of his 11th Chapter, is ſuch a Run of poor ſyſtematical inconcluſive Stuff that it deſerves no Notice. Had they urged Obedience upon any ſuch Principle, is it credible that they ſhould never once mention it, or that they ſhould not have been as plain and expreſs upon it as their Prophets and Writers were afterward, when theſe Doctrines came to be known and received among them? Would Preachers of Righteouſneſs thus omit or ſuppreſs the proper and moſt effectual Motives to it, and not have been as plain, direct, and explicit in them, as in the Moral Duties and Obligations themſelves? Would *David* have been ſo much at Loſs to account for the Proſperity of the Wicked and Sufferings of good Men in this Life, had he known any thing of a future State of Retribution? Surely had he known or believed any thing of this, he never would have ſolved the Difficulty as he did, by ſuppoſing an equal Diſtribution

of temporal Good and Evil at laſt; that the Wicked flouriſhed but for a ſhort Time, and the Adverſity of the Righteous was ſoon compenſated by greater temporal Bleſſings and Proſperity: Or had he known any thing of a future eternal State of Torments he would never have poured out ſo many execrable Curſes and Imprecations of temporal Vengeance upon his Enemies, without once ſending any Man to the Devil; doubtleſs the holy Zeal of this Royal Prophet would have riſen higher, had he known of any farther or greater Revenge to have been executed upon thoſe that hated him. And as to *Job*, the Argument of the whole Book turns upon the Juſtice and Equity of God and Providence towards good and bad Men: and *Job*'s Friends could never have charged him with ſome ſecret Sin or Iniquity, againſt all that had been ever known, or obſerved in his Life and Manners; they could never, I ſay, have done this merely, and on the Account of his preſent Afflictions, had they taken a future State into their Account. But this Conſideration is never once mentioned, or ſuppoſed, among them on one Side or the other; and *Job* himſelf ſeems confident, that notwithſtanding his preſent State of Miſery, and though his Fleſh was periſhing, and falling from his Bones, yet was the Caſe much worſe, and had his very Reins been conſumed within him, yet as God, his Redeemer and Deliverer, was able, he would at laſt appear for him, juſtify his Integrity, and give them a very ſenſible Conviction of it by reſtoring him; and thus

the Story concludes, and the whole Argument winds up in an equal temporal Diſtribution of Good and Evil, without the leaſt Conſideration of a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments.

The very firſt Mention that is made of a Reſurrection of the Body, and a future State, by any *Jewiſh* Author, is in the Prophet *Daniel*, who lived under the *Perſian* Monarchy, and was a Captive in *Perſia* at the ſame Time, or under the ſame Reign, with *Ezra* the Scribe, *Eſdras* the Prophet, *Nehemiah*, *Mordecai*, *Heſter*, and the reſt of the Nation. As for our preſent Book of *Daniel*, as we now have it, with its Apocryphal Fragments, it is very plain that it contains hiſtorical Memoirs and Remains of ſeveral different Perſons living at very diſtant Times, though thrown together under under one common Name; and ſome of theſe Stories of *Daniel* are perfectly romantic and contrary to all true Hiſtory. The *Daniel* who was taken Captive the firſt of *Nebuchadnezzar*, and was then a young Man in his prime, could not be the ſame Perſon with that *Daniel* who decided the Caſe between *Suſanna* and the Elders 77 Years after, when *Aſtyages*, or *Darius*, the laſt King of the *Medes*, died, and *Cyrus*, the *Perſian*, took his Kingdom; *Suſanna*, ver. 65. *Dan.* i. 6. And much leſs could he be the ſame *Daniel* who was contemporary with *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, and who received Intelligence by the Angel, while he was offering up his Supplications, that the Decree

Decree was come out for the Reſtoration of the People: But the Hiſtorical and Chronological Errors of this Book are too many and groſs to be inſiſted on here; and beſides, I would not clog this Controverſy with any thing of that Nature. But I ſhall now proceed to the Author's twelfth Chapters, where he makes a Tranſition from the Old Teſtament to the New, and conſider his ſyſtematical Divinity there.

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

Jesus not the Jewish *prophetic Messiah, he disclaimed the first and most essential Character of the Messiahship. The Author's Cavils and Evasions about it, exposed and refuted. The Apostles were not infallible, and never pretended to it. The Differences and Divisions among themselves, a most evident Proof of it. The Author's Pretences against it, vain and trifling. He uses the Words* Inspiration, *and* immediate Revelation *in a general, loose and undefined Sense, and is not able to explain what he means by it, nor proves any Thing about it. The Miracles and extraordinary Gifts farther considered, and the Author's Suppositions about them shewn to be weak, trifling, and perfectly inconclusive.*

THE Author's 12th Chapter, and almost every Thing that follows to the End of the Book, is little more than one continued Rant. He cries out like a Man ground between two Mill-Stones, considering what I had granted on the one Hand, and what he cannot prove on the other. He confounds his own systematical Divinity with Christianity, and seems to be contending rather for *Bacon* than Religion. It is plain, that his Religion is an implicit,

implicit, hiſtorical Faith, and that without this, all the Duties and Obligations of Moral Truth and Righteouſneſs, when placed upon their own ſure everlaſting Foundations, can ſtand him in no ſtead. My Chriſtianity is the eternal, immutable Religion of God and Nature reſtored. But what his Chriſtianity is, he is not able to tell us, nor has he ſo much as attempted it in any one ſingle Point of Doctrine. But this ſyſtematical Hero ſeems to be thus enraged, becauſe I had granted him ſo much, and that he ſees himſelf uncapable of proving more.

And now I hope the Reader will forgive me in not quoting an Author regularly, who always preaches without a Text. I am ſure there can be no greater Blunders or Falſifications than what he is guilty of, in all that I had ſaid about Jeſus, as the *Jewiſh* Meſſiah, *according to the Prophets*. That the *Jewiſh* Meſſiah, according to all the Prophecies concerning him, was to be a great temporal Prince, and to reſtore the Kingdom to the Houſe of *David*, is ſo very evident, that I ſhould ſcorn to diſpute with a Man who would deny it. And that our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt diſclaimed all ſuch temporal Power, and declared on his Trial before *Pilate*, that his *Kingdom was not of this World*, he cannot deny. What then does this Man mean? Muſt a Perſon be a *Jewiſh* Meſſiah, according to the Prophets, who diſclaims and renounces an eſſential Character of that Meſſiaſhip to his Death? Or did he claim a

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Thing before, which he denied and disclaimed at last? But such is his systematical Fate, and must always be the Fate of *School-Divinity*, that he is forced to affirm and deny the same Thing. He was the *Jewish prophetic Messiah*, and yet he pretended to, or claimed, no *temporal Power*. But O! the Power of systematical Divinity, and the Front of systematical Divines! How necessary are such Teachers to confirm us in our Catechisms, and what, O! what, should we do without them?

I had maintained that Jesus Christ had never declared himself explicitly and directly, as to this essential prophetic Character of the *Jewish* national Messiah, neither to the Populace nor to the Rulers, nor to *John the Baptist*, who sent two of his Disciples, while he was in Prison, to put the Question home to him. But when he came upon his Trial, he openly and directly disavows this Character, and enraged the Populace by it, who had hitherto stood by him, and therefore thought themselves now deserted and betrayed. And ought not this Writer to have said something or other to this directly, and without Evasion? Or does he think that the Pulpit must always bear him out in every Thing that is base and dishonourable? But the plain Truth of the Matter was this, That our Saviour answered to one Part of the prophetic Character of the *Jewish* Messiah, as the Restorer of Moral Truth and Righteousness, but not to the other, as the Restorer of the Kingdom, which last therefore he always evaded,

evaded, and never had declared himſelf, off or on, till he came upon his Trial, upon ſuch a Charge, and then he abſolutely diſclaimed and renounced it, and they could not prove it againſt him. This is what I had ſaid, and what this Writer dares not contradict. But he pretends that, according to me, *he, Chriſt, had ſuffered himſelf to be carried about all over the Country for a Twelve-month together by the* Jewiſh *Mob, and to be declared their Meſſiah*, &c. *page* 348. But there is not one Word of Truth in all this, the Mob indeed followed him under this Notion for a Twelve-month together, but that he *ſuffered* it, or *ſeeked* it, is the quite reverſe to what I had ſaid. So far from it, that he had always ſought a Retreat, and to keep himſelf as much as poſſible out of the Way from any ſuch popular Concourſe. During this Time he continually kept himſelf as much as he could in Woods, Deſerts, and the moſt remote Parts of the Country. And when great Multitudes of the Populace had found him out, and flocked about him, after he had preached to, and exhorted, them, he ſent them away, and then withdrew himſelf, and they could ſcarce ever find him twice in one Place. But as ſoon as they could get any Intelligence, they followed and crowded about him again, as their King, and he could not prevent this popular and epidemical Madneſs. And when he went up to *Jeruſalem* for the laſt Time, he deſigned to have kept the Feſtival privately, and *Incog*; but the Rabble or Populace

Populace had met with him upon the Road, ſet him on Horſe-back, or on an Aſs, the Horſes of that Country, and led him in Triumph through the City, and proclaimed him King. And when they had done this, they guarded him from Day to Day, for four or five Days at leaſt, while the Rulers dared not lay Hands on him *for Fear of the People.* During this Time he preached publickly in the Temple, and other Places of Reſort, the Doctrines of Moral Truth and Righteouſneſs, and did not ſpare the groſs Corruptions and Abuſes of the Scribes and Phariſees, or Rulers themſelves. But in the mean while, he gave no Umbrage to the Government, or any Ground of Suſpicion that he had any Deſign or View to the Kingdom; though the Populace or Mobility all underſtood him ſo. And therefore while they were in this Humour, he might have got clear off, and eſcaped the Hands of the Rulers for that Time, had not *Judas* betrayed him in the Manner that is very well known. They could not now have ſeized him in the Day without an immediate Reſcue, while the whole Populace were ſo ſtrongly in his Intereſt, and therefore they were forced to do it by Stratagem, and find him out in the dead of the Night, and in a cloſe Receſs, by bribing and corrupting one of his own Servants and Attendants. But when he came upon his Trial, and had renounced all Pretenſions to the Kingdom, the Populace all turned againſt him at once, and it was not then in the Power of the

Government

Government to save him. This is the Representation which I had given of the Matter, and which I have been the larger in repeating, that the Reader may see the true State of the Case, and the great Candour and Fairness of my Adversary.

What this Author *rants* upon, for I cannot call it *Preaching*, throughout this whole Chapter, proceeds upon a gross Mistake; as if I had made the Restoration of the Kingdom to be the one and only Character of the Messiah; whereas I only made it a necessary, essential Character, and no Person could be received and owned by the *Jews* as their Messiah, without this Character. And yet this Champion of Contradiction and Inconsistency, would make Jesus to be the *Jewish* prophetic Messiah without this Character, and after he had renounced and disclaimed it. But his own Apostles and Disciples were of another Mind, who all forsook him, and gave up all Hopes and Expectations from him, as soon as they had given up this Hope of a Restoration of the Kingdom. And had they not afterward believed his Resurrection from the Dead, which revived the same Hope and Expectation from him again, they had never troubled themselves any more about him, or preached him as the Messiah.

It is very true, that the whole *Jewish* Nation, not excepting the Apostles of the Circumcision, in Consequence of their Prophecies, expected a State of Truth and Righteousness,

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as well as of Peace and Prosperity under the Messiah. But then the latter was to be the Pledge and Security of the former, and they were not to receive or believe in any one as the Messiah, but a conquering Prince of the House of *David*. And therefore all the other Characteristics of the Messiahship could have availed nothing, had not the Genealogies, which at that Time they were very sure of, proved Jesus of *Nazareth* to have descended in a direct Line from *David*. And yet the Difference between these Genealogies in *Matthew* and *Luke*, as some might think, could not bear the whole Weight of Christianity. That there should be fourteen Generations more between *David* and Christ, reckoning by Father and Mother, through a Space of 1100 Years, might seem improbable, and no Man would produce it as a Demonstration of the Being of a God, or of a future State of Rewards and Punishments. And yet if our Author should lose but such an Uncertainty as this, all his Christianity is gone, and his immediate Revelation or Inspiration must come to nothing.

But though the infallible Prophecies concerning the temporal Kingdom of *David*, and the Distribution of universal Peace and Righteousness from that to all other Nations, have never yet been accomplished, yet our Author lives in the firm Belief, that it will be done one Time or other. But if he would only suffer his Religion to wait for the Confirmation of his Faith, I believe he would never trouble the World

about it more. Perhaps this Writer may blame, or cenſure me, for not having taken a particular Notice enough of his Argument in this Chapter; but the candid Reader, I am ſure, will have good Nature enough to forgive my not doing what I could not poſſibly do. And this being the Caſe, I ſhall come to the Argument of his 13th Chapter.

I had ſaid that the Apoſtles never pretended to Infallibility, and that if they had, their Differences and Diviſions among themſelves, muſt have expoſed and confuted any ſuch Pretence. The main Difference aroſe about the Terms of Communion between the Chriſtians of the Circumciſion and Uncircumciſion, or between Chriſtian *Jews* and *Gentiles*. In this grand Point they could never come to any Agreement, but the Apoſtles and Teachers of the Circumciſion oppoſed St *Paul*'s Miniſtry among the *Gentiles* as long as he lived. When they were met together in their grand Council, they had very long and warm Debates upon the Queſtion, Whether the whole Law, or only a Part of it, ſhould be impoſed on the *Gentiles*, or how far they ſhould be obliged to conform to it. This ſhews evidently that they looked upon themſelves as bound to the whole, and that they made a Matter of Religion and Conſcience of it. And a ſtrong Party of the Sect of the *Phariſees*, who believed and were come over to the *Nazarenes*, inſiſted ſtrenuouſly on the total Conformity of the *Gentiles* to the Law. Now if ever they had been under the infal-

lible Guidance of the Holy Ghoſt, one ſhould have expected it at this Time, when they were all met together in Council, and debating a Point of ſuch vaſt Importance to the whole Church, upon which the Fate of Chriſtianity itſelf was to depend. And yet we find no ſuch unerring Spirit among them. Had they been infallible, they muſt have been all of one Mind, and no ſuch Heats, Differences, and Diſturbances, could have ariſen in the Council. I had urged this, and a great deal more, from the Conduct of *Peter*, and the whole Chriſtian Circumciſion towards St *Paul* in his Miniſtry among the *Gentiles*. But our Author, though he takes no Manner of Notice of all this, yet he pretends to carry the Point againſt me; and he fully anſwers all that I had offered by overlooking the whole, and ſaying nothing to it. He harangues very long upon this, that he might be ſure to run far enough out of the Way; he refers to many Texts of Scripture, in which they are ſaid to be guided and directed by the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Truth; and that they were true, open, and faithful in all that they taught and delivered, and did not go about to deceive. And from hence he concludes, that they muſt have been under ſome ſupernatural Impulſe of Inſpiration, or immediate Revelation, in all that they taught and delivered. But I am ſure this dark Writer cannot tell us what he means by any ſuch ſupernatural or ſuper-rational Light; he has not been ſo good as to mention any one

of thoſe ſupernatural Doctrines, which muſt have been above and beyond the Search and Inveſtigation of all *human Reaſon*; and any Man not habituated to it, or making a *Trade* of it, would be aſhamed to talk in ſuch a general, looſe, and unintelligible Way. But *by this Craft we get our living*. The inward divine Temper, the Spirit of Truth and Love, Peace and Purity, is the Spirit of God; this is the Spirit which God gives to all thoſe whom he will favour and reward, and whatever flows from this Spirit comes from God, and is the only ſure Mark and Pledge of divine Favour. But this is a Spirit which the Chriſtian Jews never had, either in the Apoſtolic Age, or any other; they have been ſo far from ſuch a Spirit, that God has never yet bleſſed them with any Spirit of common Decency, Peace, and Concord. And this ſelf-ſufficient Writer is continually raging and raving at me, for maintaining all the great important Principles and Doctrines of Religion in a rational Way.

Through the Remainder of this Chapter the Author declaims in his own Way upon the extraordinary Gifts and Powers of the Spirit, which is the Subject of his Preachment from *page* 374 to *page* 390. I had ſaid, that thoſe extraordinary Gifts and Powers, could be no Proof either of the Infallibility of Perſons, or the Truth of Doctrines, becauſe they were never confined to any Moral Character; but falſe Prophets and Teachers had them as well as the true; and they who had them were at Liberty

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as to the Uſe of them, and might apply them either to good or bad Purpoſes. I ſuppoſed that whenever they had thoſe Gifts and Powers, they were left to a diſcretional Uſe of them; but I did not ſuppoſe, as this Writer imagines, that all, or any of them, were permanent ſtanding Qualities, like the natural Powers and Faculties of the Mind. The contrary to this is evident enough, and what I very well knew, though I did not then chuſe to ſpeak it out; and therefore this haſty Writer need not have taken ſo much Pains to prove it for me, and to draw on the Argument with ſo much greater Strength and Weight againſt himſelf. But his *Zeal* eats up his *Underſtanding*. He would readily grant me, that the Gift of Tongues was a permanent abiding Faculty, and that they could exerciſe this Gift at any Time, and upon any Occaſion or Subject as they pleaſed. But this I deny, that they could ſpeak thoſe different Languages at Pleaſure, or that they could ſpeak them at all with any Senſe, Coherence, and Conſiſtency. And ſince he has given me this Occaſion for it, I ſhall here examine the whole Matter, ſo far as we have any Account of it. The original Account of this is in the ſecond of the *Acts*, where the Holy Ghoſt, in the Likeneſs of fiery cloven Tongues, fell upon about 120 at once; and immediately they all began to talk in different Languages. A great Multitude being gathered together upon this Occaſion, who were come up from all Parts of *Aſia* to the Feaſt, were greatly aſtoniſhed to hear them

thus talking all together, and uttering ſome Words which every Man underſtood in his own Language. Some were grave and ſerious upon this; they thought there muſt be ſomething in it very extraordinary; and cried out, the wonderful Works of God! But others laughed, and as no Man could tell in any Language what they were talking about, or what they aimed in ſuch a Confuſion of Voices, concluded that they muſt be drunk, or under ſome Intoxication and Infatuation or other. And thus the whole Company ſtood either wondering or laughing, and knowing nothing of the Meaning or Deſign of ſuch a clang of Tongues, till, the reſt being ſilent and compoſed, *Peter* ſtood up, and, in a rational coherent Diſcourſe, let the People into the Occaſion of all this. That what they had ſeen was from an extraordinary ſupernatural Spirit ſent down from Jeſus of *Nazareth*, whom they had crucified and ſlain, and whom God had raiſed from the Dead, and had given this wonderful Atteſtation to his being the Chriſt; and this had ſuch an Effect, that about 3000 were converted and baptized into the Belief of Jeſus as the Chriſt that Day. Upon the whole, this ſeems very plain, that while the 120 were talking all together in different Languages, no Man in any Language could make any Thing of it, or underſtand any Thing by it.

That this extraordinary Gift was no Gift of Knowledge, or Underſtanding in Languages, is farther evident from the Account St *Paul* gives

gives of it in the Church of *Corinth*, where it had bred very great Confuſion and wild Diſorder. But I wonder through what Glaſs our Syſtematiſts read that 14th Chapter of the firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, if they read it with their own Eyes, they muſt needs ſee there a Deſcription of thoſe *gifted-Tongue* People exactly the ſame with our modern *French* Prophets. St *Paul* therefore, *ver.* 7—11. ſpeaks of it as uttering different *Sounds* or Voices, inſtead of ſpeaking different Tongues, and compares it to muttering, grumbling, piping, harping, and trumpeting, rather than talking in any articulate Language. While they were in theſe Fits, or Agitations, it was by Chance if they ſpoke any conſiſtent Senſe that could be underſtood or interpreted by any one preſent. And in this Caſe the Apoſtle mentions the Gift of *ſpeaking* and the Gift of *interpreting* Tongues in this Way, as two different Gifts; and a Man might have the one without the other. One Man ſhould ſpeak a Language which he did not underſtand, and could not interpret, and another interpret a Language which he could not ſpeak. Some of theſe tongue-gifted People, by Practice and Strength of Imagination, could work themſelves up into thoſe Raptures, Extaſies, and ſtrange preternatural Motions, and thereby loſe their Reaſon and Senſes almoſt at any Time; but others could not, and therefore were not thought ſo much favoured by the *Spirit*. But it is plain, by the whole Account of the Matter, that while they were under this mechanical Power

and Operation of the Spirit, they had no Reaſon or Underſtanding left of their own; and that this extraordinary powerful and blind Spirit had no Tendency at all, either to Inſtruction or Edification. If any Stranger or Unbeliever ſhould have come in among them, while they were in theſe frantic Fits, he muſt needs think them *mad, or out of their Wits,* as the Apoſtle tells them, *ver.* 23. and as it is plain they were for the Time. St *Paul* therefore earneſtly intreats them to covet the beſt Gifts, and ſuch as might tend to Inſtruction, Exhortation, and godly edifying, and by no Means to covet or try to exerciſe ſuch a Gift as this. And yet this is the wonderful Gift and Power of the Holy Ghoſt, by which the lying legendary Monks of the fourth Century would perſwade us, that Chriſtianity had been propagated all over the World, even ſo far as *India* and *China* in the Apoſtolic Age itſelf. But there is no authentic Account of any of the Twelve, but *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, as having had any Hand or Share in preaching and ſpreading the Goſpel, and the reſt having been diſappointed of the Kingdom, might have betaken themſelves to their fiſhing, and reſpective Callings again, for any Thing we know to the contrary. But becauſe no Account is given of them among the *Acts* of the Apoſtles, the lying fabulous Monks aforeſaid ſent them off to *Perſia*, *India*, *China*, *Africa*, *France*, *Spain*, *Germany*, and the Lord knows whether. But it is plain from the authentic Account which

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we have of the Matter, in the *Acts* and *Paul*'s Epistles, that the Apostles of the Circumcision kept together in and about *Jerusalem* during all St *Paul*'s Travels, where he still found them as he visited that City up and down at very distant Times. And we find them generally present in the Council, *Acts* xv, which I place in the Year 56, and but 14 Years before the Destruction of the Temple. And as they must now be growing old, it is not likely that they should undertake such vast Journies after they had dropt or neglected their Commission above 20 Years. But that such Expeditions should have been undertaken, and *Luke*, who writ a Book professedly to record their Actions, say nothing of the Matter, is absolutely incredible. Nor can it be supposed, that these Men who were rigidly strict to the Law, should thus disperse themselves through the whole World, and among all Heathen Nations, where they could neither eat nor drink with any Body. The Travels of the Apostles therefore to show and exercise their Gift of Tongues, as we find it in Ecclesiastical Story, must be looked upon as perfectly fabulous and romantic. I have been the more particular here, that I might, if possible, settle this Account of the Gift of Tongues with the Author, since he has talked of it with as little Sense as they had talked with it.

This Writer, *page* 378, supposes, that those primitive Christians in the Apostolic Age, might have an extraordinary Gift of Wisdom and Knowledge, which they could communicate by teaching

teaching in a rational Way. This might be, for any Thing I know, and therefore I ſhall ſuppoſe it as well as he. But what then, what follows? Why, if they had any ſuch Gift, he ſays they could not poſſibly *abuſe it. It is a Contradiction to ſuppoſe that any Perſon ſhould, by the Exerciſe of this Gift of divine Wiſdom and Knowledge, that is, by the very actual Exerciſe of the Knowledge of Truth, and by declaring and imparting to others the Knowledge he himſelf had of the Truth, promote and propagate falſe Doctrine and Error.* I believe it is impoſſible almoſt for any Man to read this and forbear laughing. He ſays it is a Contradiction to ſuppoſe that any Man ſhould abuſe any extraordinary Degrees of Wiſdom and Knowledge, as long as he actually makes a right Uſe of it in communicating Truth to others. This is very oracular, that a Man cannot be ſuppoſed to make a right and a wrong Uſe of any Gift or Talent, whether ordinary or extraordinary, at the ſame Time. But why may not any extraordinary, as well as ordinary, Knowledge be abuſed? This Author cannot talk Nonſenſe, when he talks Senſe; but he may abuſe his better Underſtanding, and pretend that Nonſenſe is good Senſe, and Falſehood Truth; and ſo might a Man of the moſt extraordinary Wiſdom and Knowledge abuſe it, by applying it to wrong Purpoſes, and doing the more Miſchief with it.

In the next Place, *pag.* 380, he pretends to contradict and confute me, as having ſaid, or

ſuppoſed,

ſuppoſed, that the Power of working Miracles was a permanent abiding Habit, to be exerciſed at any Time, and at mere Will and Pleaſure, like the natural Powers and Faculties. But he is groſsly miſtaken in imagining that I had ſaid, or ſuppoſed, any ſuch Thing, for I knew the contrary; and that the healing Miracles could be only wrought upon thoſe who had the *Faith* of *healing*. If a Man had this Faith of healing, he might be healed tho' he had no other Faith, nor any Virtue, and the wickedeſt Man might have this Faith as well as the moſt righteous Perſon; and therefore we find that out of the ten Lepers, who were cleanſed at once, only one of them returned to give Glory to God, or to thank our Saviour for what he had done. Madmen and Lunatics might have this Faith in a higher Degree than others, as they had the greateſt Force of Imagination. And accordingly we find that a very great, if not the greateſt, Part of thoſe miraculous Cures were wrought upon ſuch. That the Demoniaciſm of the New Teſtament was Madneſs or Lunacy, is evident from all the Symptoms, and the whole Deſcription of it; and any Man may be convinced of this, by only going to *Bedlam*, if he had never ſeen the different Species and Turns of Madneſs before. That Lunacy, Epilepſies, and other ſuch extraordinary Diſtempers, ſhould be aſcribed to the immediate Preſence, Power, and Agency of the Devil, is no Wonder, ſince this was the common Opinion not only among the *Jews* but all other Nations, while the natural Cauſes were unknown,

unknown, and the Cure ſcarce ever effected. But this cannot affect the Miracle, becauſe the Cure of a Fever, or any common Diſtemper, by a Touch, or Word of Command, muſt be allowed to be very extraordinary and miraculous. I had therefore never ſaid or ſuggeſted, that this Power of healing was conſtant, and not occaſional; but what I ſaid was this, that whenever they had this Power, and could exerciſe it, as they were free Agents in it, they might make a good or bad Uſe of it, as much as of any natural Power which they had, and in the Exerciſe of which they were free. But when he can ſay nothing elſe, it is always in his Power to miſtake me, and then confute his own falſe Suppoſitions. That all theſe extraordinary Gifts and Powers were occaſional, he muſt needs ſee to have been my Opinion, and therefore he need not have proved it himſelf; but I find he is reſolved to do every Thing for me, and leave me nothing at all to do but to thank him.

SECT.

SECT. IX.

That there was a real Difference and Separation beween Peter *and* Paul, *occaſioned by the different Goſpels they preached; and that* Peter *himſelf was a falſe Apoſtle and Teacher, whenever he claimed any Authority and Apoſtleſhip among the* Gentiles, *or went about to urge his* Jewiſh *Faith among them, proved againſt this Writer's ſtrong Aſſertions and weak Pretences to the contrary. His Objections to what I had offered relating to the Apocalypſe, conſidered and anſwered. The* Jewiſh *Prophetic Meſſiahſhip a National Deluſion, inconſiſtent with the true Faith of Chriſt, and the ſpiritual Nature of his Kingdom; this groſs Deluſion owing to their miſunderſtanding the Nature of the* Abrahamic *Covenant of Faith and Righteouſneſs, and their taking it as an abſolute Promiſe and Covenant of Peculiarity with that Nation. What had been ſaid, with Regard to the Apocalypſe, conſidered and defended.*

THIS Author, in his 14th Chapter, which I am now come to, undertakes to prove, that there was no Difference between the Apoſtles and Teachers of the Circumciſion and Uncircumciſion in the Apoſtolic Age; that there was a perfect Harmony and Agreement between

between them; that *Peter* and *Paul* had never any Difference about the Obligation of the Law upon the *Gentile* Converts; and that all that I had offered to this Purpoſe is mere Invention, Forgery, and Miſrepreſentation. But I am ſure if he has proved nothing elſe, he has proved himſelf to be a very bold and daring Writer, and made it evident, even to a ſenſible Demonſtration, that he truſts to his Syſtems and his School-Divinity more than to his Bible. Were there ſuch long and warm Debates, much diſputing in the *Jeruſalem* Council upon this Queſtion, Whether the *Gentiles* ſhould be bound to the whole Law, or only to Part of it? Did *Paul* afterwards withſtand *Peter* to the Face, and charge him with Prevarication and Inconſiſtency? Did *James* ſend down his Jewiſh Zealots to *Antioch*, after the Decree of the Council, to inſiſt upon Circumciſion and Obedience to the whole Law? Did *Peter* and *Paul* break upon this, and a Schiſm in the Church happen upon it, during the whole Apoſtolical Age? Did not *Paul*, long after this, in the beginning of his Epiſtle to the *Galatians*, mention *Peter* perſonally, and by Name, five or ſix times, as the Head and Ringleader of thoſe *Judaizers* and declare himſelf to be the only Apoſtle of the *Gentiles* by Revelation? That they had owned this, and given him the Right-hand of Fellowſhip upon it, not to diſturb or intermeddle with him in his Miniſtry among the *Gentiles*, and did ſo openly and plainly charge the *Judaizing* Apoſtles and Teachers, as falſe Apoſtles

and

and Teachers, and for uſurping the Miniſtry which had been wholly left to him? Was all this, I ſay, true, and yet no Difference between *Peter* and *Paul*, or between the Apoſtles and Teachers, on one Side or the other? I have here aſked this Writer a long Queſtion, to avoid multiplying of Words, which muſt take him three or four Volumes more to anſwer, and furniſh us with the Subſtance of his Sermons for ſeven Years to come. He owns that there were falſe Apoſtles and Teachers got in among the *Gentile* Churches, where no Apoſtle or Teacher but St *Paul*, or under his Direction, could have any Commiſſion or Authority; but he will give you his Word for it, and prove it when he is at Leiſure, that *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, had no hand in it. He will own, no doubt, that theſe Apoſtles had broke Faith with him, and were gone off from their Word in ſending out their Agents and Emiſſaries againſt him; and yet he will maintain that there had been no Difference, but a perfect Harmony and good Underſtanding between them. But there is no diſputing with ſuch a Writer as this: He talks to the World as if he was in ſome little petty Congregation or other, where his own Word and Authority muſt paſs for Goſpel and Revelation.

The Author having harangued upon this, and talked, off and on, about it, as not knowing what to make of it, for two Sheets together, comes at laſt, *pag.* 424, to what I had ſaid concerning the *Jeruſalem* Council, as impoſing the

the Law of Proſelytiſm upon the *Gentiles*, as *neceſſary*, or as a Matter of *Religion* and *Conſcience*. And here he ſays, that I *aſſert ſeveral Things, for which there is not the leaſt Foundation in ſacred Hiſtory*. But let us hear what theſe Things are. But in talking of this Council, there is not one Thing in it, or relating to it, which he does not miſrepreſent, while he is charging me with Miſrepreſentation.

I had ſaid, that the *Jeruſalem* Council enjoined the Law of Proſelytiſm upon the Heathen *Gentile* Converts, *i. e.* a total abſolute Separation from the reſt of the World, with Regard to Eating, Drinking, Cohabitation, Intermarriages, *&c.* and that they enjoined this as *neceſſary*, or as a Matter of *Religion* and *Conſcience*, according to Law. But he ſays, this Law, or Decree of the Council, was not *preciſely* the ſame with the Law of Proſelytiſm, as given by *Moſes*. What he means by *preciſely* I do not know, or whether his Preciſeneſs was a Matter of *Indifference* or *Neceſſity* to him; but I am ſure it is the ſame Law, and founded upon the ſame *Superſtitions*; that the People of God muſt not converſe, or keep Company, with Idolaters: and I know that St *Paul* exempted his Heathen Converts from any Obligation to this ritual Part of the Law, and exempted himſelf from it; and that this was the Occaſion of the whole Difference and Schiſm. And if the Author cannot ſee this, I muſt deſire him once more to throw off his Spectacles, and his falſe Glaſſes,

and

and to read the Bible with his own natural *Eyesight.*

The Author here tries, as much as possible, to darken and perplex the Case, by talking about the Proselytes of Righteousness, and the Proselytes of the Gate, which has not the least Relation to the Business of the Council, either as the Occasion of calling it, or to the Question debated in it. It is plain, from the Text, that the legal Proselytes were quite out of the Question, and had no Concern at all in the Debates of the Council. The Proselytes of Righteousness were thorough *Jews* and total Conformists, and, perhaps, two Parts in three of the whole Nation, at that Time, might be such Proselytes, and not of the natural Seed of *Abraham*; for they would *compass Sea and Land to make one*, and when they had got him, *make him much more a Child of the Devil than before.* And the Question concerning the Proselytes of the Gate, had been settled in the Church of *Jerusalem* fourteen Years before this Council, when *Peter* took them in, and we do not find the least Hint or Intimation of any Disturbance at *Jerusalem* about it afterward. But *Paul* and *Barnabas* had now preached *Christ* to the Heathen *Gentiles* at *Antioch*, and had converted great Numbers of them, without obliging them to the Law of *Moses*, either in Whole, or in Part. But certain of the Brethren in *Judea*, being alarmed at this, went down to *Antioch*, and taught the new converted Brethren there, the Disciples of *Paul* and *Barnabas*, that unless they

were circumcised, and obeyed the Law of *Moses*, they could not be saved. And after *Paul* and *Barnabas* had had great *Dissention* and *Disputation* with these *Jerusalem* Zealots, the Church of *Antioch* could not be satisfied without appealing to *Jerusalem* to know the Right of the Matter, and what Doctrine of Christ they believed and preached there. This brought on the Council, and occasioned a great Question and Division among them. The *Jewish* Zealots stood to their Point, that though they had received the Proselytes of the Gate, who had been long Proselytes for Righteousness, as Church-Members, and granted them the Benefits and Privileges of the new Kingdom; yet they were not to take in the whole *Gentile* World upon such easy Terms; and therefore the new *Gentile* Converts, *those who from among the Gentiles had been turned to God*, should be circumcised, and obey the whole Law. This was the State of the Case; but the more moderate Part in the Council, after much ado, or much disputing, prevailed; and they agreed to receive the Heathen *Gentiles* into the Church, upon the same Terms that they had done the Proselytes of the Gate before. They should only separate themselves from Idolaters, and not eat and drink or maintain any friendly Intercourse with them, and then God would bless them as Brethren and Fellow-Christians. But it is evident, that St *Paul* never submitted to this Order of Council, and he would never suffer his Heathen Converts to be enthralled by it, so far as he could prevent it. He had

had been at *Jeruſalem* upon this Occaſion, and brought them to as moderate Terms, as he could, and for the reſt, he always took Leave to diſobey, and preach againſt them. This I take to be the plain Matter of Fact, as related in the xvth of the *Acts*; and upon which I need not have ſaid ſo much, if I had not had to do with a Polemical *School-Divine*. All that he ſays to make the Proſelytes of the Gate the Subjects of this Decree, and the Occaſion of the Queſtion, is perfectly idle; and if he had all the Syſtematiſts in *England* with him, it could never ſet aſide the plain Scripture Account of the Matter. He ſees every thing through his Glaſſes, but he had much better read the Scripture without them.

But this Writer ſeems reſolved to make up in Aſſurance what he cannot in Argument, for he tells us, in *pag.* 417, *That whatever Way we underſtand that Decree, there is not the leaſt Proof that ever the Apoſtle Paul contradicted it; or that ever there was the leaſt Difference between him and the other Apoſtles upon that Head.* But is it not very ſtrange that *Paul*, *before much People*, ſhould *withſtand* Peter *to the Face*, and this upon the very Queſtion of eating and drinking with the *Gentiles*, as *Paul* did, and as *Peter* himſelf had done for a Time; and that this Apoſtle, in his Epiſtle to the *Galatians*, ſhould mention *Peter* ſo often, and lay the chief Blame of the Diviſion and Schiſm upon him, and that he ſhould claim the ſole Apoſtleſhip of the *Gentiles* to himſelf, and repreſent, as falſe Apoſtles, and

falſe Teachers, all that withſtood him in this. Is it not ſtrange, I ſay, that all this ſhould be true, and yet no Difference between *Paul* and *Peter*, or any other Apoſtles of the Circumciſion? I muſt own, that I ſhould have thought this an unſurmountable Difficulty, had not our Author, for whom nothing is too hard, cleared it up ſo well. From all the Memoirs we have of *Peter*'s Temper and Conduct, he was bold, daring, and enterprizing, when he thought himſelf ſafe; but would never ſtand to any thing againſt a ſtrong Oppoſition, or when he apprehended himſelf in Danger. But our diſcerning Author can ſee no Marks or Appearances of this in the Story; but *Peter* was infallible, even when he denied his Maſter to his Face, with Oaths and Imprecations, in the High-Prieſt's Houſe; or when he vowed, that his Maſter ſhould not ſuffer Death, and give up his temporal Kingdom for the Salvation of the World; or when his Maſter, after his Reſurrection, could hardly believe him ſincere in his Vows and Proteſtations, that he loved him; nay, even the Pope himſelf could ſcarce ſtickle harder for the Infallibility of *Peter*, than this Proteſtant Divine does: and yet, if we take St *Paul*'s Word for it, *Peter* had no more Right to the Apoſtleſhip of the *Gentiles* than he or I have. But I would not ſay any more to ſuch a Writer upon this Head, he muſt diſpute it further with the Church of *Rome*.

The Author has already clearly proved againſt me, that there was never any Difference between

tween *Peter* and *Paul*, with Regard to the Decree of the *Jeruſalem* Council, which had ſettled every Thing before; that theſe two Apoſtles continued always good Friends; that no Diviſion or Schiſm in the Church ever happened about it; and all that I had ſaid to the contrary is pure Miſrepreſentation and falſe Hiſtory. And now, in his 15th Chapter, he ſets aſide and fully confutes ſome other groſs Miſtakes of mine, which I had unhappily fallen into for want of conſulting him about it. He undertakes to prove, that the Apocalypſe is not the *Chriſtian Revelation*; or that it is not there that we are to look for the peculiar Doctrines of Chriſtianity; that there is nothing in that Book to countenance the Worſhip of Angels, Invocation of Saints, or Prayers for the Dead; that they did not confine Salvation to their own Meſſiaſhip; and that there is no Foundation in that Book for a Fifth Monarchy; with ſeveral other Things of Conſequence, that will be conſidered in Courſe. This is, in general, what he undertakes to prove, and which I am now to examine.

As the very Title of this Book is the Chriſtian Revelation, or *the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt*; as no other Book of the New Teſtament claims any ſuch Character, or pretends to any new Revelation; and as I had ſo great an Authority as Sir *Iſaac Newton* for it, that the ſame Book was received and owned as the true Chriſtian Revelation in all the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity, I thought myſelf pretty ſafe in ſuppoſing and af-

firming it. But becauſe I had aſſerted it, this Writer muſt deny it, though he could offer no other Reaſon for it; and I am perſuaded, that if I had aſſerted, or maintained the quite contrary, he would have done it too, and taken the oppoſite Side. I am pretty well acquainted with him now as to this; if I had a Mind to prove a Thing againſt him, I would deny only to put him upon the Proof of the contrary, which I am ſure he would attempt, whatever his Succeſs might be. But, ſays he, *pag.* 426, "It is "evident, from the expreſs Declaration of the "Book itſelf, that it was not ſo properly and "immediately deſigned to be a *Revelation* of "*Doctrine*, as to be a Revelation of future "Events. It is called the *Revelation of Jeſus* "*Chriſt, to ſhew unto his* Servants the Things "which muſt ſhortly come to paſs, *Chap.* i. 1. "And again it is called the Prophecy, *Ch.* xxii. "19. It is therefore a poor trifling Obſerva-"tion, that no other Book of the New Teſta-"ment has the Word *Revelation* in the Title "of it. If he could prove that no other Book of "the New Teſtament was given by *Inſpiration* of "God, (as the Apoſtle *Paul* tells us *all Scripture* "*is*) or was deſigned to inſtruct us in the Do-"ctrine of Jeſus Chriſt; this would be ſomething "to his Purpoſe." It ſeems then, this Writer has got the Word *Inſpiration*, and I have the Word *Revelation* on my Side. But whereas he pretends to a better Right to his Word than I have to mine, I muſt take Leave to except againſt it; but, with Submiſſion, I am not diſ-

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puting with him about Words but Things. What he means by *all Scripture* as given by *Inſpiration*, I am ſure he cannot limit or explain, and I have ſettled this Account with him already: but what I mean by Matters of Revelation, or Matters abſolutely above and beyond the Search and Inveſtigation of *human Reaſon*, every Body muſt underſtand, and there is no Diſpute about it. But I ſay, there is no other Book of the New Teſtament that pretends to any ſuch *Revelation* above *Reaſon*, either in Name or Thing; and if this Writer could have produced any ſuch Doctrine or Pretenſions, he had here a proper Opportunity for it and ſufficient Call to it; but his Buſineſs is mere Evaſion, and he has nothing elſe to ſay or do. Could our Author have diſtinguiſhed between Matters of *Reaſon*, and Matters of *Revelation* above Reaſon, he might have ſaid ſomething to the Purpoſe; but this he could not do, nor will his Scheme admit of it; and ſhould he come to Particulars, he muſt preſently look like a *Silver-Smith:* He involves himſelf in *Egyptian* Darkneſs; his Defence is Obſcurity, and he knows it very well.

I had repreſented, or urged, the Four and Twenty Elders, with their Vials or golden Cenſors full of Incenſe, which were the Prayers of the Saints upon Earth, as a plain Proof of Submediatorial Worſhip before the Throne of God, upon the Principles of this Book. Whether the Four and Twenty Elders were deſigned to repreſent Saints or Angels, it was the ſame

Thing as to my Argument of Submediatorial Worſhip. But ſurely theſe Submediators were Beings before the Throne of God, ſubordinate to the Lamb, or Chriſt, himſelf, who had a Right and a Power to mediate with God for the Saints on Earth; and therefore, in my Opinion, it is a Confirmation of ſuch Submediatorial Worſhip both of Saints and Angels. And I know, were I at Liberty here to enter into the Principles and Practice of the Catholic viſible Chriſtian Church, in the ſecond and third Centuries, I could prove both the Worſhip and Invocation of Saints and Angels. But hear how he comes off, *pag.* 427. *But what if the four and twenty Elders be only the Repreſentatives of the Chriſtian Church, and the Vials full of Odours be only deſigned as a figurative Repreſentation, in the figurative Senſe of Prophecy, of the Worſhip paid to God in the Church, which is Sir* Iſaac Newton's *Interpretation of it, then the Author's Inference from it falls to the Ground.* But what if mediatorial and ſubmediatorial Worſhip, in the prophetic Language and Stile, ſhould be intended to repreſent the immediate direct Worſhip of God? And what if this prophetic Language and Stile ſhould be ſomething that this Writer cannot make the leaſt common Senſe of? Why then his Criticiſm muſt *fall to the Ground*, and he would be no more able to make Senſe of this Book than Sir *Iſaac Newton* himſelf was.

But there is another Inſtance in this Book for ſubmediatorial Worſhip, which I did not

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take Notice of, and which would have been more directly to my Purpose. I hope he will take this as a Kindness, though I am not much concerned about it whether he does or no. The Place I had forgot to mention the Reader will find, *Rev.* viii. 3, 4. An Angel here is represented as having a Censor *with much Incense, which he was to offer up with the Prayers of all Saints,* &c. This I should have taken as a plain Proof of submediatorial Worship, or the Worship of Saints and Angels, but the Author is of another Mind; he says, *pag.* 428, *The Word Angel admits of so many Senses in this Book, that no Argument can be drawn from it.* But why then does he talk of the Word *Angel*, if the Word in this Book has no certain fixed Meaning? I thought the Word had some Meaning or other, and that it could not signify *God* or *Jesus Christ*: But, it seems, the Word signifies nothing with him, or may signify any thing, or every thing, at Pleasure, in the *Prophetic Stile.* But I would not wish this Writer to make himself a *Prophet*, for I doubt he will come short of a *Rational Divine.* He is here defending a Book which he knows nothing of, and yet because I had given it in as *John*'s he must defend it right or wrong.

As to what he says afterwards of this Revelation of Jesus Christ, which he denies to be the Christian Revelation, I do not think worth while to consider. I think he denies every Thing in the Christian Revelation that can be the true natural genuine Sense of it. He tells us,

us, that this *very Book*, the *Chriſtian Revelation*, is to be underſtood in ſome myſtic, prophetic Senſe or other, which he knows nothing of. This Book however, though it is not the whole, is yet certainly a Part of the Chriſtian Revelation, when rightly underſtood. But becauſe ſuch an Underſtanding might be difficult or impoſſible, you muſt truſt to better Underſtandings than your own, or be damned as Deiſts, Sceptics, Infidels, or what not.

That the *Nazarene* or Chriſtian *Jews* in the apoſtolic Age, confined Salvation to their own Faith and Perſwaſion, and that they allowed *of no other Name given under Heaven, by which Men might be ſaved, but the Name of Jeſus*, as their prophetic Meſſiah, and being baptized in that Name, Faith, or Profeſſion, is ſo very evident as to need no farther Proof. The whole *Jewiſh* Nation, after they received the Doctrines of a Reſurrection, and a future State, had confined eternal Salvation to their own Law and Religion; and though they admitted the devout Gentiles, or Proſelytes of the Gate, as Candidates for Righteouſneſs and the Kingdom of Heaven, yet they could not admit of the Poſſibility of their Salvation, or true juſtifying Righteouſneſs, till they became Proſelytes of Righteouſneſs, and conformed to the whole Law. And now the *Nazarene* or Chriſtian *Jews* made the Entrance ſtill narrower, and excluded all the reſt of that Nation, as well as the whole World beſides, from the Hope of Salvation,

Salvation, who did not believe this Jesus to be the true national prophetic Messiah.

According to the Prophets, this *Jewish* Messiah was to be a mighty conquering Prince of the House of *David*, who was to restore the Kingdom, by subduing all other Nations that had kept this People in Subjection, or would not now submit to their King. All the Kings and Princes of the *Gentiles* were to send up their Gifts and Offerings to *Jerusalem*, as his Subjects and Tributaries; and all the Merchants of the Earth were to employ their Ships, in bringing Home the scattered Tribes from all Parts of the Earth where they had been dispersed, and the Nation who should refuse this Obedience and Subjection to *Israel* and her King, was to be utterly destroyed. This Kingdom was to be a Kingdom of Peace and Righteousness to those who would submit to it, and all other Nations were to be cut off or reduced to a State of absolute Vassalage. This is the glorious triumphant Representation which the Prophets have given us of the Messiah's temporal Kingdom, and the vast Benefits which all other Nations were to derive from this chosen peculiar People of God; and which is all as opposite as Heaven and Earth, Light and Darkness, to every Thing that Christ said about his Church, and the Means of obtaining his heavenly everlasting Kingdom. But one would think, that Time and Providence long ago should have sufficiently unravelled this Secret, to convince any Man, that all this, from first

firſt to laſt, was a mere Deluſion, which that whole Nation, both Prophets and People, had been under; however when it comes about, it will prove a Revelation above Reaſon, which ſome People are much at a Loſs for now.

It ſeems plain to me, that this national Deluſion was founded in a Miſtake concerning the Nature of the *Abrahamic* Covenant, or the Covenant of Faith and Righteouſneſs, which God made with *Abraham*, and, in him, with all Mankind; that he would always, in every Nation and Country, be the God, and exceeding great Reward, of all faithful and true Worſhippers, or of all ſuch as by a filial Love to, and fiducial Truſt in, him, ſhould recommend themſelves to his Favour, by an uniform Courſe of ſincere Obedience, Integrity, and a good Life. This Covenant between God and Man, which is founded in all Nature and Reaſon, that vain-glorious People took as an abſolute Promiſe, or Prophecy, of what muſt come to paſs among themſelves, as the natural Seed of *Abraham*; and that no other Nation in Futurity could receive any Bleſſings from God, but what muſt be derived from them, as the Means or Channel of Conveyance; and this groſs Error proved at laſt their Deſtruction, as it has deſtroyed almoſt all Senſe and Reaſon in Religion ever ſince. But though they are finally diſperſed and abandoned by God and Providence, yet we have ſtill the ſame Sort of *peculiar People* depending upon abſolute Covenants, Decrees, and Promiſes, and upon the

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ſame Power of ſtrong and faithful Preſumption without any ſuitable perſonal Qualifications; and they have ſtill the ſame Reſort to a vicarious Righteouſneſs, or Juſtification by Proxy.

As to Prayers for the Dead, the Author ſeems to admit it, ſo far as I had urged it upon the Authority of the Apocalypſe. I did not pretend the Chriſtian *Jews*, ſo early as that, prayed for the Deliverance of the Souls of the dead Saints out of Purgatory, or any Place of Torments; this was an Improvement long after under the Papal Hierarchy, or Church-Monarchy; but they prayed for their full and final Reward, or Admittance into the Kingdom of Heaven, which they thought could not be till the Reſurrection and final Judgment. In the mean while, they conſidered their Souls as hovering about their Tombs and Sepulchres, or under the Altar where they had formerly worſhipped, and where St *John* ſaw them; here they were conſidered as Eye and Ear-Witneſſes to the Prayers made to and for them. And thus far, for ought I can ſee, this Author and I are agreed.

All that I had ſaid, to ſhew that the *Jewiſh* Prophets, and the whole Nation expected a fifth Monarchy, or a glorious temporal Kingdom, under which theſe national Saints, or peculiar People, were to rule all Nations, and to have the Government of the Earth put into their Hands, the Author would turn into Figure, and into downright Nonſenſe. The whole of what he ſays about this has only this amount,

amount, that the prophetic Language and Stile were unintelligible, that led that whole Nation into a grand Deluſion; and any Syſtematiſt now may put what Senſe he will upon it. This is indeed the beſt Apology that has ever been made for thoſe prophetic infallible Writers, and I believe the only Defence that could be made. But the worſt of it is, that it will not hold good even in Allegory, or any Sort of Compariſon, and when this whole Nation had been ſo groſsly deluded by it, and all underſtood it for a temporal Kingdom, the reſt of the World could receive no Benefit by it, and the Remains of that Nation to this very Day continue under the ſame Unbelief, or prophetic Faith, and cannot help deriding the ſtrange Application that we make of their Prophecies. You might poſſibly convince the *Jews*, that they were under a general national Deluſion; but it is impoſſible ever to convince them that they miſtook their Prophets; and impoſſible for this Writer, by all his Shifts and Evaſions, to convince me, that I had miſtaken them. But as he is here only diſpoſed to deal in *Figures*, I ſhall leave him till he is out of his *Mathematical* Way. I know ſomething of Arithmetical and Geometrical Figures, but am not fit to deal with a Metaphyſical and Divine Figuriſt, and therefore he may reſerve this for thoſe who are more capable of ſuch Sort of Philoſophy. For I am ſure there can be nothing in Nature which ſuch a *Chemiſt* would not be able to prove by *Figurative Divinity*.

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The Author has ſome other trite Obſervations upon what I had ſaid about the Apocalypſe. He obſerves that every Thing propheſied of in that Book, could not be then *ſhortly to come to paſs*, or juſt at hand, becauſe the End of the World is there ſpoken of. I had proved, and the Book itſelf proves it, that the ſecond Coming of Chriſt, as the *Jewiſh* prophetic Meſſiah, was then juſt at hand, or *ſhortly to come to paſs*. But between this Coming of Chriſt to judge the Nations, to reſtore the Kingdom to *Iſrael*, to make them the Lords of the World, to reduce all Nations to them, as Subjects and Tributaries, and in the mean Time to reſtore their antient Temple, Prieſthood, and Sacrifices; I ſay, between all this and the End of the World, or final Conſummation of all Things, when the whole Scene was to be removed from Earth to Heaven, there was to be an Interval of a Thouſand Years, according to this Prophecy. But this Writer, who is better verſed in prophetic Language and Learning than I am, will doubtleſs prove, that either all this has been accompliſhed already, or will be accompliſhed. But though I ſhould be willing to give him Credit for what is paſt, I hope he will not expect it for all Time to come.

SECT.

SECT. X.

What the Author has offered concerning the ſacrificial Scheme, imputed Righteouſneſs, or Satisfaction, conſidered and replied to. The particular Marks of Impoſture in the Moſaic *Plan of Prieſthood and Sacrifices. The Concluſion.*

THE Author in his 16th and laſt Chapter, proceeds to conſider ſome Objections which I had made to the common mediatorial Scheme, or the Doctrine of Chriſt's Satisfaction, ſo far as it has been generally underſtood and explained. I muſt own, that this is a turning Point, and almoſt the Hinge of the whole Controverſy, and I ſhall therefore the more particularly conſider all that he has offered about it. And when he had declaimed and rambled on for thirty Sheets together, it was Time to come to ſomething at laſt.

Page 443. " I have now gone through the " ſeveral Objections of our pretended *Moral* " *Philoſopher*, as far as they affect the Autho- " rity of the Holy Scriptures in general, whe- " ther of the Old Teſtament or the New. " It doth not properly come within my De- " ſign to enter upon the Conſideration of the " particular Doctrines of Chriſtianity, eſpe- " cially

" cially thoſe which are controverted among " Chriſtians. I might therefore entirely paſs " by thoſe Parts of our Author's Book, where " he pretends to ſet up for rectifying the Er- " rors and Miſtakes that have obtained among " Chriſtians, with Regard to *ſome of the* " *Doctrines of the Goſpel.*" This, with a little more to the ſame Purpoſe, is his Introduction to the only Point which he ought to have ſpoke to, and to have cleared up had he been able. This Writer has fully vindicated Chriſtianity as a *Revelation above Reaſon*, without entering into any of its particular diſputed Doctrines, for that was not his Buſineſs, or any the leaſt Part of his Deſign. But I would fain know of him, what Doctrines of Revelation above Reaſon there are which have not been, and are not now, diſputed *among Chriſtians?* If he had had any ſuch Doctrines, he need not have writ two or three and thirty Sheets, to have ſqueezed them out, and not have done it at laſt. But it is plain, that he is only a general Advocate, for he knows not what, while he has nothing in particular to prove or defend. How far he has made good his *Generals*, we have ſeen already; but now, Thanks be to Heaven, we are come at laſt to ſomething *particular*. He has fully and clearly vindicated the Authority of the Old and New Teſtaments as a *Revelation* above *Reaſon*, without defending any particular Doctrine of that Kind, which he was not at all concerned to do, becauſe

they are all disputed *among Christians*; and yet he has faithfully discharged his Duty, and is your most obedient humble Servant, though he can do nothing for you.

Page 445, He gives a Definition of God's pardoning Mercy in these Words: "The true "Notion of Christ's Satisfaction, or Christ's "dying for our Sin, in general, is this, that "it is a Provision made by the Wisdom of "God, to dispense his Grace and Favour to- "wards guilty Creatures, in such a Way as "doth, at the same Time, secure the Majesty "of his Government with the Authority of "his Law, and shew forth his Justice and "Purity." I have nothing to object to this general Definition of *pardoning Mercy*, that it ought to be dispensed in a Way suitable to the Perfections of his Nature, and the Honour of his Government. And therefore I shall only consider how he brings a *Vicarious Sacrifice*, *Imputed Righteousness*, or Justification by Proxy, into it.

I had represented it as a perfect Inversion of all Reason and Rectoral Justice, to punish the Innocent for the Guilty, or to spare the Guilty for the undeserved Punishment of the Righteous. No doubt, but the most innocent Person in the World may be a great Sufferer on the Account, or by the Occasion, of wicked Men. But then he would not be said either to be punished for his own Sins, or to exempt others from Punishment who had really de-

ſerved it. But this Writer cannot ſee why the Innocent may not be puniſhed for the Guilty, and the Guilty ſpared, or more favourably accepted, upon that very Account. But for my Part, I cannot help his Miſunderſtanding, and ſhould not ſay much to illuminate a Man under ſuch Darkneſs; and therefore I can give him no better Advice than to take off his Spectacles.

The great Difficulty here to be accounted for is, how the Sufferings of an innocent Perſon, whether we ſhould call it Puniſhment, or Affliction, ſhould make Satisfaction for the Sins of the Guilty? He ſeems to give up the Sufferings or Afflictions of Chriſt as penal, and cannot pretend to ſay that Merit or Demerit, Reward or Puniſhment, can be transferrable from one Perſon to another. How one Man may receive Benefit by the voluntary Sufferings of another, or how a whole Nation, or the whole World, may derive vaſt Advantages from the Sufferings and Hardſhips of a particular Perſon, I have ſhewn already; and this is clear and intelligible enough, without any Thing of this Author's moſt abſurd, unintelligible, *mediatorial Scheme*. In this Man's Way of Thinking, if Chriſt had not fallen a Sacrifice to the popular Ignorance and Superſtition, Rage and Malice of that Nation, the World could not have been ſaved, nor could there have been any Reſurrection from the Dead, or Life to come. But is he thus far obliged to the ignorant wick-

ed *Jews*, and would now damn them to all Eternity for it? Would he now declaim againſt the Wickedneſs that ſaved the World? Suppoſe the *Jews* had all received Jeſus as their national Meſſiah, worſhipped him as God, and ſuffered him to die under the moſt univerſal Applauſe and Adoration, muſt the whole World then have been damned? It is aſtoniſhing to me, how Chriſtian Divines can cenſure and condemn the *Jews* for doing a Thing that was neceſſary to be done for the Salvation of Mankind, and which God had before ordained and appointed to be done. Were they made ſuch damnable Sinners for our Salvation? All this muſt follow, with much more which I might expreſs with greater Energy, ſuppoſing the Death of Chriſt neceſſary to the Salvation of Mankind, and that we could have received no Benefit by him, as a Prophet and Reſtorer of Righteouſneſs, unleſs he had offered a Sacrifice for us as a *Prieſt*. But there is not one Word in Scripture of Chriſt's dying to reconcile God to us, or to diſpoſe him to be merciful to penitent Sinners, or to procure or merit Pardon upon our Repentance, or to manifeſt and diſplay the Juſtice and Righteouſneſs of God, and his Hatred of Sin. All this is mere Fiction and Forgery, and though it is Part of his School-Divinity, what he has learned and what he muſt teach, yet it is abſolutely inconſiſtent with Chriſtianity and with all Religion. But this Writer's Management here is perfectly

rifling and evaſive, that is, as if he was reſolved to ſay ſomething, or ſeem to ſay ſomething, for a Doctrine which he knew could not be defended. There is one Objection, Pretence, or Evaſion, which he here brings, but what I had ſuppoſed and anſwered before, and therefore inſtead of anſwering it again, I muſt deſire him to review once more what he has pretended to anſwer. It is plain that this ſacrificial Scheme has been grounded upon the groſs miſtaken Notions of the *Jews* about their legal Propitiations and Atonements for Sin, and which the Chriſtian *Jews* very early applied to the Prieſthood and Sacrifice of Chriſt. But I have proved that there was no ſuch Thing as any real Propitiation for Sin under the Law, and that no Sacrifice could be ſubſtituted for, or taken inſtead of legal Obedience. Thoſe Sacrifices were a Part of that legal Obedience, and the moſt burdenſome and unreaſonable Part of it too; and therefore they could not poſſibly typify or repreſent any real Propitiation or Sacrifice for Sin. But as the *Jews* formerly depended on their Sacrifices and Atonements for Pardon with Repentance, ſo have the Groſs of the Chriſtian World ever ſince, and ſtill do. And I believe it is impoſſible to preach, teach, or apply this Doctrine of imputed Merit and Righteouſneſs in any Way whatever, ſo as not to have ſuch a miſchievous Effect in general, as encouraging Preſumption, quieting Men in their Sins, and bearing off Repentance.

This Gentleman labours and ſweats at the ſacrificial Scheme, as a Maſon would upon a Piece of Clock-work. He thinks there muſt needs be ſomething more in it than I have made of it, and yet he knows not what to make of it himſelf. I had proved that there could be no ſuch Thing in *Nature* as a Tranſmutation, Commutation, or Subſtitution of one Perſon, or Thing, for another, and that there was no ſuch Thing under the *Law of Moſes*. Merit and Demerit are incommunicable, perſonal Adjuncts, or Attributes, and making a Transfer here, is deſtroying all Nature, Reaſon, and governing Juſtice. I had proved that the Death of Chriſt was no otherwiſe voluntary, than as every righteous Perſon muſt chuſe *Suffering* rather than *Sin*; and as he was to be the great Pattern and Exemplar of Righteouſneſs to others, and to give a public authentic Witneſs, or Proof, to the only Way in which Men could be juſtified, accepted, and rewarded of God. And I would aſk this Writer, whether Jeſus was betrayed by *Judas* or not? Or whether he did not take all the prudential Care poſſible to avoid falling into the Hands of the *Jews* at that Time, and whether he did not ſeek this Deliverance earneſtly with Tears, and in bloody Sweats? If this be ſo, it is plain, that he did not think his Death neceſſary to the Salvation of the World, and that there could have been no ſuch prior Contract between God and him. Had he certainly known

known the Intention of *Judas*, and what had been reſolved upon at that very Time, and had he then gone into the Garden on Purpoſe to bring on the Event, and to reſign himſelf, he might as well have gone in the Day, and reſigned in open Court; and in this Caſe he could not have been betrayed, or have ſuffered any Thing by the Treachery of *Judas*, or the Malice of the *Jews*; but had his Death been criminal in them, he muſt have been an Acceſſory to it himſelf.

I think I had plainly proved that there was no ſuch Thing as vicarious Sacrifices under the Law; or that the Life of a Beaſt was never ſubſtituted for the Life, Liberty, or any other Property, of a Man. The ſacrificial Beaſt had been forfeited by Law before, and a Man's paying that Forfeiture did not excuſe or exempt him from any other Mulct, Fine, or Penalty in Law. And I am the more ſure of this, becauſe the Author, after all his Toil and Struggle, has been able to give no Inſtance to the contrary. What was called *making the Atonement* by the Prieſt's ſprinkling the Blood, could ſignify nothing but *declaring the Atonement*, or giving this open public and legal Notification of it, that the Perſon's Sacrifice was accepted, and that by this perſonal Act of Obedience to the Law, he ſtood acquitted in Law. It was in the Nature of a legal Diſcharge, that the Law by ſuch an Offering, or perſonal Act, was ſatisfied to that Time. And

in like Manner, Jesus Christ by his Obedience to Death, and shedding his Blood upon the Cross, gave a public authentic Declaration or Notification of the Acceptableness of such personal Obedience, as the only Righteousness that God would accept or reward, as he himself was rewarded for it, and could not be excused from it. But this has no Relation at all to the common absurd, unintelligible, Notion of vicarious Sacrifice, or substituted Righteousness, which is all founded upon the grossest and worst Part of *Jewish* Ignorance, Presumption, and Superstition. If our Author does not like this Account of mine of *making Atonement*, i. e. *declaring* or *notifying* the *Atonement* or Acquitment in Law, by such or such an Act of *personal Obedience* to the Law, let him put any other Sense upon the Phrase, without introducing the grossest Absurdity, Imposture, and Superstition. And he must do this, or give up the whole Argument, so far as I am concerned in it. For the Dispute here between him and me, is only about Imputed Righteousness, Redundant Merit, Supererogation, or Vicarious Sacrifices; and if he can prove nothing of this, he might as well be silent for the future.

Dean *Prideaux*, in his Letter to the Deists, has proved that Christianity can be no Imposture, because it bears none of the natural Marks or Characters of Imposture, as every false Religion must. And he shews that these Marks

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and Signatures of Impoſture are very evident in the Religion of *Mohammed*. But there is not one of the Dean's Marks and Characteriſtics of Impoſture, but what might be applied with great Strength and Clearneſs to the *Moſaic* Oeconomy. I have had Occaſion in going along to obſerve many of them, and, to take Leave of this Author, I ſhall here put the Chief of them altogether.

1. The whole Plan and Contrivance of this Polity was calculated and directed for the temporal carnal Intereſt, Wealth, and Power, of the Politician, by ſecuring the Government for ever in his own Tribe and Family. And tho' *Levi* was curſed in *Jacob*, yet as the two Brothers happened to be of this Tribe, the Curſe was now to be taken off, and the reſt of the Nation reduced to ſuch a State of Dependence on *Levi*, as was but little better than Vaſſalage. I have proved the legal Revenues payable to the Prieſthood, could not amount to leſs than an annual Rent, or a third Part of the whole Produce, of the Lands, which had been the State of the Caſe in *Egypt*, and therefore this People had but exchanged one Bondage and Servitude for another; only as they had been Slaves to Foreigners before, they were now to be Slaves to their own Lords and Maſters. Now as Power in a governed Society muſt follow Property, as this Tribe was ſcarce a fifth Part of any other Tribe, and not a fiftieth Part of

of the whole, and as they had at leaſt a third Part of the Property, it is plain that *Levi* muſt have been richer and more powerful than any other Tribe in the Proportion of 20 to 1; and conſequently almoſt double in Wealth and Power to all the reſt, and able to maintain a War againſt them.

2. In order to ſupport and ſecure this exorbitant Wealth and Power in the Prieſthood, two Things were abſolutely neceſſary. *Firſt*, That the Community of this Tribe ſhould be diſperſed up and down over the whole Country, and have their Towns and Cities, with the adjoining Land and Villages allotted them, among all the other Tribes. Had their Inheritance been thrown all together, it muſt have fruſtrated the grand Deſign of ſecuring theſe Sacrifices, Gifts, and Offerings to the Lord. But by this Proviſion they were always and every where ready to make Obſervations, and give in their Informations of all ſtated or occaſional Dues and Offerings; and at hand every where to act the Part of Informers, Apparators, Tything-Men, and Conſtables, and to take the moſt effectual Care the *Lord* might not be robbed of his Rights and Dues; and yet the Lord only was to be the Inheritance of this Tribe, though they had a greater proportional Share of the Lands than any other Tribe, and were ſo diſpoſed of, that the whole Land was almoſt put into their Power. But

another

another Thing abſolutely neceſſary to ſecure this *Inheritance of the Lord* was, that all Idolatry and Image-Worſhip ſhould be puniſhed with Death. For though this is perfectly repugnant to the Nature of Religion, and all true acceptable Worſhip of God, yet the local, tutelar God of *Iſrael*, who was in the Cuſtody of the High-Prieſt, and to whom all the Sacrifices and Offerings were made; this God, I ſay, or God under this idolatrous Notion of him, could not have been worſhipped in this Way, had not the Law enjoining it been guarded with ſuch a Sanction.

3. And this ſhews plainly, that this Sort of inſtituted Worſhip was nothing but Superſtition, Idolatry, and falſe Religion; and that it was not, and could not be, in Reality, the true God, but an Idol of human Policy and Contrivance, that was thus worſhipped.

4. The Indulgence given under this Oeconomy to perſonal Intemperance, eſpecially the the moſt predominant and prevailing Luſts of the Fleſh, Drunkenneſs and carnal Concupiſcence, or the exceſſive Uſe of Wine and Women, is another ſtrong and glaring Mark of worldly carnal Policy. A Man might be as drunk as he would, and as often, without coming within the Verge of the Law, or ſuffering any legal Puniſhment for it. And any Man might keep as many Wives and Concubines

bines as he thought fit, and turn them off again at Pleaſure, to take freſh ones, and glut his Luſts with the greateſt Variety, and no body could call him to Account for it. He might put away his Wife by only giving her a Bill of Divorce under his Hand to diſcharge her from him; and this without aſſigning any Reaſon, or leaving the Woman any Remedy in Law, even though ſhe ſhould be ever ſo much abuſed and ill-treated. But what is ſtill worſe, a Man being moved with a jealous Mind, whether with or without a Cauſe, or whether real or only pretended, could put his Wife to the Trial of Jealouſy, and procure a Prieſt to poiſon her, if he thought fit, and had received a valuable Conſideration for it. The Caſe, in ſhort, was this; when any Man was jealous of his Wife, and could prove nothing againſt her; or if he only pretended Jealouſy, for this could not be known, he might put her to this Trial. He was to have her to the Prieſt, who was to bring her before the Lord, and put her to an Oath, called the *Oath of Curſing*, in which ſhe was to take a Draught of the Prieſt's own preparing, and imprecate a Curſe upon herſelf, that what ſhe was about to take might cauſe her Belly to ſwell, and her Thighs to rot off, if ſhe was guilty of the Crime ſhe was ſuſpected of; and then ſhe was to take off the Draught which the Prieſt had prepared and brought her. This Draught is called the *holy Water*, the *Water of ſprinkling*, and the *bitter and curſed Waters*; and

and, no doubt, it was in the Prieſt's Power to make it holy or curſed, bitter or ſweet, innocent or poiſonous, as he thought fit. But here are the plaineſt Marks of Impoſture in the World. Had there been any miraculous Interpoſition in the Caſe, the Woman might have drank any common Water or Wine, at her own Choice, and the Effect would have been the ſame, where every Thing ſhould have been done fairly and unexceptionably, without any Ground to ſuſpect a Cheat or Impoſture. But the Prieſt was to prepare and bring it himſelf, and then to ſprinkle ſome of the Duſt of the Sanctuary into it, as if the whole Magic and Myſtery had lain in that. In this Caſe, the jealous Huſband was not obliged to name the Perſon ſuſpected, nor to declare the Grounds of his Suſpicion; and the Law has made no Proviſion what muſt be done, ſuppoſing the Prieſt himſelf had been the ſuſpected Perſon, and then he would doubtleſs have cleared the Woman, and proved her Innocency upon ſuch a Trial. So that a married Woman could not be ſafe in playing the Whore, or committing Adultery, tho' ever ſo ſecret, with any but a Prieſt, and then ſhe might be ſure of being brought off upon any Trial of Jealouſy in her Huſband. But how far ſuch a Law muſt have put every Man's Wife into the Power, and left them at the Devotion, of the Prieſt, I need not ſay, ſince the Thing is plain enough and ſpeaks itſelf; and therefore ſhall only refer the Reader, for this Law, and the Trial upon

upon it, to *Numb.* v. from *ver.* 11. to the End.

Such Marks and Symptoms of Divinity would have been thought very bad ones, had they been found in *Zoroaſter*, *Confucius*, or *Mohammed*; but as they are only to be found in God's faithful Servant *Moſes*, it would be the higheſt Preſumption and Wickedneſs to ſay any thing againſt it. Such Things as theſe might look like Difficulties to a vulgar unaſſiſted Eye, or to a Man not well acquainted with ſpiritual Optics and ſupernatural Chemiſtry; but they muſt be all clear and plain to any one who will but conſider the mutable and variable Nature of Truth and Falſhood, Right and Wrong. It is true, there are many Things under the *Moſaic* Oeconomy which would not be right now, and which could not have been right for any Time before or ſince; but yet conſidering the different and variable Circumſtances of Perſons and Things, they might be all right then. It is true, that God thought fit to inſtitute a Sacerdotal Government, to ſubject that Nation to the Power of the Prieſts, and to have his Name and theirs ſubſtituted indifferently for each other; and though this might be thought ſomewhat odd, had no poſitive Law intervened, yet it muſt be all right and reaſonable, juſt and neceſſary, by divine Will and Appointment. And when God had thought fit to inſtitute ſuch a *Theocracy*, in which the High-Prieſt was to be his Vicegerent and Oracle,

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and the reſt of the Tribe his Court-Officers, and Servants in Livery; as this muſt be very burdenſome and expenſive to the Nation, it was but reaſonable and fit that they ſhould be indulged in ſome carnal Liberties and peculiar perſonal Enjoyments, the better to reconcile them to, and make them the more eaſy under, ſuch a *divine Oeconomy*. And then as for Miracles, or the Exerciſe of a ſupernatural divine Power in Favour of one Nation, and by deſtroying other Nations, and declaring himſelf an Enemy to them for *Iſrael*'s Sake, while this favourite People were as wicked and rebellious as any of the reſt; though this may not ſeem agreeable to God's Wiſdom, Juſtice, and Impartiality in his moral Government of the World, as a common Father and moſt righteous Judge; yet ſince God was pleaſed to fix a ſpecial Love upon this People, and make them his firſt-born and peculiar Delight: and ſince this is a Matter of immediate Inſpiration and Revelation, it ought not to be doubted of, or called to the Bar and Judgment of Reaſon and common Senſe. Some, perhaps, may think that I am only jeſting, and entertaining myſelf in a Way of Merriment; but I muſt profeſs ſeriouſly that I take this to be the true Nature, Scope, and Conſequence, of all our Author's Arguments and Reaſonings againſt the *Moral Philoſopher*; and as ſuch I muſt leave it till I hear from him again.

But

But to conclude; I had laid it down as an agreed eſtabliſhed Point, both in Reaſon and Scripture, that God, in the laſt Day, will judge *every Man according to his Works*, or *according to the Deeds done in the Body*, *whether they have been good or evil:* And I wiſh our Author had here declared himſelf freely, whether he believes this Doctrine or not, or whether he has not ſome Salvo for it *under the Goſpel.* He talks all along as if he did not believe, that Men *under the Goſpel* ſhould be judged according to their Works, or the Deeds done in the Body, but according to their laſt Profeſſions, Vows, and Promiſes, or the Temper they ſhould happen to die in. This Writer muſt of Courſe be a Preacher of Righteouſneſs, and would not ſay directly, that Chriſt died to ſatisfy for the Breach of his own Laws, and conſequently to nullify their Obligation and deſtroy his own Authority; and yet he ſeems to be under ſome Difficulty, how to reconcile any Scheme of perſonal Obedience to his Notions of a Vicarious Sacrifice, Imputed Righteouſneſs, and Juſtification by Proxy. I hope he will clear up this a little farther in his next. But in the mean while, a little more Modeſty and Charity might better become a Preacher of the Goſpel. He ought to tell us what that *Faith* is which he oppoſes to *Infidelity*, and what that Repentance on which he would enſure *Goſpel-Pardon*, before he makes ſo free with his Imputations of *Deiſt*, *Free-Thinker*, *Infidel*,

Infidel, *Enemy* to *Revelation*, &c. I wiſh him as well as he can me, and ſhould as ſoon pray for him; but I do not know that I can have any Thing to anſwer for in writing againſt him, nor could I, perhaps, ever be convinced of this, unleſs I ſhould have it by Inſpiration, or immediate Revelation. But however I could never deſire the Spirit of this Writer, but ſhould rather pray for a little more Partiality, and a better Temper: And when he writes again, I hope he will take more Care to diſtinguiſh between *Religion* and *Superſtition*, or between the internal ſpiritual Worſhip of the one true God, and the external, carnal, and bodily Worſhip of an Idol or falſe God; or, which is the ſame Thing, I ſhould adviſe him for ever hereafter to diſtinguiſh well between *Judaiſm* and *Chriſtianity*.

LETTER

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TO

EUSEBIUS.

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TO

EUSEBIUS.

SIR,

YOUR *True Chriſtian's Defence*, &c. not coming to Hand, till I had almoſt finiſhed my Anſwer to *Sophronius*, I have now but little more Time than juſt to acknowledge my receiving it, and thank you for the Favour and Civility of it. We had long expected the Performance of your Promiſe to *Theophanes* about two Years ago, that you would eſpouſe his Cauſe, and make good the Deficiency of his Reaſonings. But as you have now at laſt taken his Place, and he is willing to reſign it, I am highly pleaſed that a Gentleman of ſo much Learning, Candour, and good Senſe, has undertaken to ſupply all his Defects and Failures. I ſhall be always

 proud,

proud, *Eusebius*, of your farther Acquaintance and Correspondence, and hope to let you see, in the Course of this Debate, that *Theophanes* was not so weak a Man, nor so much a Tool of mine, as you would make him. I have largely considered and debated already, in my foregoing Reply to *Sophronius*, the Evidence of Miracles, as a Proof of Revelation above Reason. And as you have offered nothing new upon this Subject, I may be excused in passing the more slightly over that Part of your Argument, and not repeating what I had urged before. I take the rational Evidence of Religion to be clear, strong, and universal, and what Mankind could never have overlooked and lost, had not the several Pretensions to Prophecy and oracular Revelation blinded and misled them, and carried them off from the first and most obvious Principles of Reason. But your authoritative, positive Evidence, is what the far greater Part of the World never knew any Thing of, or are ever likely to know; nor can they who have it, or pretend to it, agree about it in any one single Point.

But as you have ventured to go farther than *Sophronius*, or any learned Man before you, in giving us a distinct categorical List of Fundamentals, or the Essentials of Christianity, as distinct from the Religion of Nature and Moral Principles of Reason, what you have offered about this, will deserve a more distinct and particular Consideration; as likewise what you have offered concerning the prophetic

Meſſiaſhip of Jeſus Chriſt, and the literal Accompliſhment of the *Jewiſh* Prophecies in him. Theſe two Points are doubtleſs Matters of great Importance, as they include almoſt every Thing of Conſequence in the whole Debate. And therefore a brief Diſcuſſion of theſe with you, will put an End, *Euſebius*, to all the Trouble I deſign to give you at preſent.

You diſtinguiſh very well between the *Fundamentals of Chriſtianity*, and Things *neceſſary to Salvation*, and thereby own, that the Fundamentals of Chriſtianity are not neceſſary to Salvation. But ſurely the Fundamentals of *true Religion* are neceſſary to Salvation, and therefore that Sort of Chriſtianity, the Fundamentals of which are not thus neceſſary, cannot be the true Religion. I doubt you here confound *Fundamentals* with Non-neceſſaries; for to ſay that the Fundamentals of any Religion, whether natural or revealed, are not neceſſary to *Salvation*, is to deſtroy all Religion, and to confound Light and Darkneſs, Heaven and Hell.

When we ſay that Chriſtianity is not neceſſary to Salvation, or that Men may be ſaved without it, the Word *Chriſtianity* muſt be taken in a very narrow, limited, and improper Senſe, ſo as to exclude the Religion of Nature, or that true juſtifying Faith and Righteouſneſs which had always ſubſiſted, which was not at all altered by the Law, and which was only revived or reſtored by the Goſpel. When you

have excluded the true juſtifying Faith and Righteouſneſs out of your Idea and Definition of *Chriſtianity*, it can be ſcarce worth while to diſpute any longer about it. I am ſure, that Saving Faith and Righteouſneſs which St *Paul* preached in Oppoſition to the Law, as revealed and manifeſted by the Goſpel, was neceſſary to Salvation and Acceptance with God. And according to that Apoſtle, this juſtifying Faith and Righteouſneſs had been always the ſame, and the only Condition upon which Men had been approved and accepted of God both before and under the Law. Nay the Apoſtles and Teachers of the Circumciſion went much farther, and declared the actual and explicit Faith and Profeſſion of Chriſt, or Mens believing in Jeſus as the true Meſſiah, and being baptized in his Name, neceſſary to Salvation: That there was *no other Name*, or Faith, *under Heaven by which Men could be ſaved*; and that they only who thus believed and were baptized ſhould be ſaved, but all others muſt be damned. This was plainly the original *Nazarene Faith*, but this, I hope, *Euſebius*, is no Part of your *Chriſtianity*. It is no great Credit to any of our ſcholaſtic Schemes of Religion, that the moſt learned Men are continually forced to elude and evade ſuch plain expreſs Texts, and in ſuch a Manner as amounts to almoſt a downright denial of the Goſpel, as firſt preached and taught by the *Nazarene Jews*. I take the filial Love of God, and a fiducial Truſt in him, with the proper Fruits and Effects of it in brotherly

therly Love and Beneficence to Mankind, to be that Gospel-Righteousness and Revelation of Christ which St *Paul* preached.

I wish, *Eusebius*, you had been a little more explicit, and told us plainly what those Doctrines are, the Proof of which must depend upon Miracles. You would not, I presume, say, that the Being of a God, his Natural and Moral Perfections, and the eternal, immutable, Obligations of Moral Truth and Reason, must depend on the Proof of Miracles; for they certainly depend on a prior and much clearer Evidence and Method of Proof. And when these are all thrown out of the Account, as not peculiar to Christianity, I cannot see what you would have left to boast of, or what Stead the Miracles could stand you in. If there are any Doctrines of Revelation which were otherwise above and beyond the Comprehension and Investigation of Reason, you ought to name them, clear up the true adequate Notion of them, and then try how far the Miracles will go in the Proof of them. But the Gentlemen in your Way of Thinking have been so far from doing this, that scarce any two of them are agreed in any one Doctrine of pure Revelation, or what it is that they are going about to prove by Miracles. But is it not strange, that Revealed Religion should be still left so much in the Dark, as to want a new Revelation to discover it? You know very well what the Doctrines of Revelation were at the Reformation, in the *Antinomian* Scheme of *Luther*, *Calvin*,

Calvin, and the other Reformers; but I wiſh, *Euſebius*, you could tell me ſo well what they are now. We are continually put off with one general looſe indeterminate Propoſition which can ſignify nothing, that Chriſtianity is an immediate Revelation from God, and that Miracles are the true genuine Proof or Evidence of it. But I hope the Cauſe of Chriſtianity is not come to this.

It is plain, that the bare Exertion of Power can have no natural Connexion with Truth, Wiſdom, or Goodneſs; ſince that Power, how great ſoever, might be exerted by an evil Being, for any Thing we could know to the contrary, or there might be ſome Colluſion and Deception in the Caſe which we could not find out. And then, if any Impoſtor or Impoſtors ſhould pretend, that theſe Miracles were wrought in Confirmation of ſuch and ſuch Doctrines, which might be all falſe and forged, the Cheat might paſs unavoidably and beyond Detection: For if Miracles are the proper natural Proof of the Truth of Doctrines; and if the Nature and Reaſon of the Doctrines themſelves, ſuch as they would have appeared to the Underſtanding, antecedent to the Miracles, is not to be conſidered, or taken into the Account, there is no Impoſture, or falſe Religion in the World, which might not be confirmed in the ſame Way; and it would be arguing againſt Fact and common Experience to ſay, that God, in his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, could never ſuffer any ſuch Cheat or Impoſture from Miracles

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to pass, without controlling them by more and greater Miracles set against them; for it is certain that God has suffered, and still does suffer, the greatest Part of the World to be thus deluded: And it is evident, from all History, the Priests and Politicians, of all Religions, have ever gained their Point, and established their different Schemes of Superstition among the People, by the Artifice and Pretence of Miracles, Revelation, and Prophecy. Nor is it possible, even under the Gospel itself, ever to guard against such Imposture, since the Ecclesiastics, in all Countries, have their different and opposite Schemes of Revealed Religion, and all equally proved by Miracles and immediate Revelation.

The Miracles wrought by *Moses* in *Egypt*, were plainly a Trial of Power between his God and the Gods of *Egypt*; and though *Moses* here got the Victory, and proved his God to be stronger than theirs, yet this did not, and could not, prove him to be the only one true God, nor were the *Egyptians*, or *Israelites* either, convinced of this; for *Moses*'s own People no sooner got over the Red-Sea, and come to any settled Station, but they made a Calf, and ascribed their whole Deliverance to the Gods of *Egypt*. It was certainly a destroying Angel which was sent with *Moses*, for after the *Egyptians* had been all destroyed and drowned in the Red-Sea, the *Israelites* themselves, who had been thus miraculously delivered, were miraculously destroyed too in the Wilderness; all that went out of

Egypt,

Egypt, and were then upon the Liſts, from 20 Years old, and upward, excepting only two Men. And when this Generation had been cut off by Vengeance, the next was to maintain the bloodieſt and crueleſt War that ever had been known. The God of *Moſes* therefore, for he made him, and fixed him in the Sanctuary, as the local and tutelar God of *Iſrael*, might juſtly be ſtiled the Lord of Hoſts, or God of War; and under this Notion, the People always worſhipped him for Protection againſt their Enemies, and Victory in the Field; and whenever he diſappointed them in this, they preſently fell to worſhipping ſome other Gods, in Hopes of better Succeſs, till they had diſappointed them too, and then they would return to the Worſhip of their own God again. In all this it is plain that they worſhipped nothing but Power. But Power thus continually employed for Devaſtation, War, and Deſtruction, carried no great Appearance of divine Power, which is always kind and beneficent; and therefore we find the Miracles, wrought by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, were of a quite different Nature and Kind from thoſe of *Moſes*, and they proclaimed and promoted Peace as much as he did War.

The true End of all Power, whether ordinary or extraordinary, is to do good; and where Power is thus employed, it proves the Righteouſneſs of the Perſon, and the Goodneſs of his Temper and Intention as a Friend to Mankind; and this Jeſus Chriſt, the great and holy Prophet

Prophet of our Profeſſion, gave in a higher and more remarkable Degree than any other Perſon had ever done: And this certainly cleared his Character and reſolved the great Queſtion then, Whether Jeſus was a true Prophet with Authority from God, or an Impoſtor and Deceiver. All his Miracles, and the Holineſs of his Life, proved that his Power was from God, and not from the Devil, which had been the Charge againſt him. And this was all that was neceſſary to make Way for his Doctrines, which wanted nothing but a cool and ſober hearing and impartial Conſideration; and then they brought their own Credentials with them as from God, by their intrinſic native Force and Energy upon the Underſtandings and Conſciences of Men. It was this Power of Truth upon the Conſcience, which enraged the Scribes and Phariſees ſo much againſt him, who could not part with their Wealth and Dominion, for the Sake of ſuch mortifying ſelf-denying Doctrines.

But that the Power of working Miracles, however employed, and though directed to the beſt Ends and Purpoſes in the World, cannot prove the Infallibility of the Perſons, or that all their Doctrines, and their whole Practice in Religion were grounded upon Revelation and divine Authority, is as evident as any thing can be of an hiſtorical Nature. I have largely, and I think clearly, proved, in my foregoing Anſwer to *Sophronius*, alias *Leland*, that the whole Circumciſion, or all the Apoſtles, Elders,

Elders, and Brethren of that Denomination, continued the Uſe of Circumciſion, and adhered to the whole Law, both moral and ritual, as long as they lived, or at leaſt as long as the Temple was ſtanding, and they had any Prieſthood and Sacrifices ſubſiſting. If the Obligation therefore of this Law had been nullified and ſet aſide by the Death of Chriſt, or by the Revelation of the Spirit afterward, theſe Apoſtles and Brethren knew nothing of it: And that they continued this Practice all down, is plain from what happened to St *Paul*, in his laſt Journey to *Jeruſalem*, when he was ſeized there and committed to Priſon for two Years, and then ſent to *Rome*. The other Apoſtles prevailed with him to go into the Temple, and there ſacrifice, and purify himſelf according to the Law, thereby, if poſſible, to ſatisfy and appeaſe the People: For *thou ſeeſt, Brother*, ſay they, *how many Thouſands there are here that believe, and they are all zealous of the Law.* St *Paul* complied with this now, and at other Times, as the Law of his Country, and a Matter of Liberty, as he often declares; but the Chriſtian *Jews* obeyed, as a neceſſary Obligation upon them in point of Religion and Conſcience, and St *Paul* could never bring them off from it, as thus conſidered. Now if the neceſſary Obligation of the Law, as a divine Inſtitution, then remained, as they thought it did, it muſt be in Force ſtill, as much as ever, to the *Jews*; and how then can Chriſtians pretend to convert them, and bring them off from

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the Law upon any Foot of Revelation? But if it had been then repealed and ſet aſide, as no longer binding, theſe Apoſtles and Brethren muſt have been under a very groſs Error and Deluſion in this Caſe, notwithſtanding their Power of working Miracles: and beſides, it is very plain, that they all along retained the ſtrong national Prejudice of a temporal Kingdom, which they expected at that Time, or in that very Generation: And St *John*'s Apocalypſe contains a Revelation of Things then juſt at hand, and which were very ſhortly to come to paſs. Theſe Conſiderations, *Euſebius*, with others, which you will find in my foregoing Reply to *Sophronius*, are a ſtrong Proof to me, that we cannot ſafely depend on Miracles for the certain Truth of Doctrines, or Infallibility of Perſons, any farther than the Nature, and Reaſon, and moral Fitneſs of the Doctrines themſelves will go; and then the Proof from Miracles muſt be ſuperſeded by a prior and more inconteſtible Evidence.

But if one ſhould grant all that you contend for relating to Miracles, and immediate Revelation, we ſhould be never the nearer to an Agreement about Revealed Religion. Every Man's wrong Head is his Conſcience, and his Opinion or Imagination is Revelation to him; and then he has all the Miracles of Chriſt and the Apoſtles to prove the infallible Truth and Certainty of his own Miſtakes and Errors. But, for my part, *Euſebius*, I am almoſt out of Conceit with *School-Divinity*. For, pray, what are you

you and I now the wiſer for all the vaſt laborious Works and Labours of the Learned from the Beginning of Chriſtianity to this Day? Do we underſtand the Doctrines of Chriſt better now than we did above 600 Years ago? Or if not, what are we the better for all the Blood and Treaſure ſpent upon it, with the Loſs of almoſt all Peace and Charity? But you will ſay, that I only put theſe Queſtions, becauſe I am quite out of the Caſe, and cannot ſhare in the Profits; and, for ought I know, there may be too much Truth in this; for nothing but Darkneſs could make a Man ſee Daylight, as you know nothing but being out of Place could open a Man's Eyes ſo far as to enable him to diſcern the Corruptions and Abuſes of Men in Power. But, methinks, *Euſebius*, the Argument between you and me might be brought into a narrow Compaſs, and put to a ſhort Iſſue, without interrupting your more general Deſign of writing a complete Syſtem of Polemical Divinity, ſo far as it concerns the Controverſy with the Deiſts. You have only three Things to make good againſt me: Firſt, That Chriſtianity is a Revelation above Reaſon. Secondly, That Miracles are the proper genuine Proof of its Doctrines. And Thirdly, That thoſe Doctrines muſt be very plain and clear to every honeſt Enquirer. If you could prove all, or any thing of this, you would ſatisfy me; and then, perhaps, you might have the leſs to do with your other Deiſtical Adverſaries. But I

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do not pretend to over-rule or direct you in any thing of this, you must take your own Way as I shall mine.

But farther, it seems plain to me, from the History itself, that the Miracles of Jesus were not wrought with any such Design, or View, as proving himself to be the Jewish Messiah. Had this been the Case, he would certainly have chosen to work those Miracles in *Jerusalem* itself, and in their chief Towns and Cities, before the Priests, Rulers, and principal Inhabitants, which must undoubtedly have convinced them; but instead of this, he kept himself as much as possible in the most remote and desert Parts of the Country, and studiously avoided any popular Concourse of the People. And when any great Multitude of the Messiah-Men had found him out any where, and flocked about him, after he had taught and instructed them in the great important Doctrines of Moral Truth and Righteousness, and exhorted them to Patience and Contentment in their Conditions, he would send them away without giving them any Grounds to think him their Prophetic national Messiah, or that he was come to restore the Kingdom of *David*. And when he had thus dismissed one Company, he would withdraw himself privately to some other Place, to avoid any such popular Resorts and Gathering of the People, till they chanced to find him out, and crowd about him again, and so from Time to Time. Had these Miracles been wrought to prove that Jesus was the Mes-

ſiah, or King of *Iſrael*, and Reſtorer of the Nation, according to the Prophets, they would certainly have been wrought chiefly upon Unbelievers, and in their Sight and Preſence, for their Conviction; but the contrary to this is evident from the whole Story. None could receive the Benefit of thoſe miraculous Cures, but ſuch as had a ſtrong invincible, though groundleſs, Perſuaſion or Faith in him before, of his being the Meſſiah, in the popular national Senſe. When our Saviour went up laſt to *Jeruſalem*, he intended to have been there privately and undiſcovered, as at other Times, but the Populace had found him out before he came to the City; and the popular Madneſs being now ripe, and the Enthuſiaſm at the Height, they ſet him on an Aſs, and led him in Triumph through *Jeruſalem*, proclaiming him the King of *Iſrael*: And this Time the diſtracted Rabble kept about him, and guarded him for ſeveral Days ſucceſſively, while he preached openly in the Temple and chief Places of public Reſort; and, during this Time, the Rulers dared not lay Hands on him for Fear of the People, who had made him their King. Now during all this Time, while he preached daily in the Temple, and other public Places, he gave no Suſpicion, of his being the Perſon the Populace took him for, or that he had any the leaſt Pretenſions to the Kingdom; he preached Repentance, Mortification, Self-denial, and a heavenly Mind, and endeavoured to prepare them not for a Temporal but an eternal Kingdom. And many

of the Priests and Rulers, as St *John* tells us, believed on him, that is, they believed in him as a true Prophet from God, and as a most holy Man, but not as the national Messiah, or Prince of the House of *David*, who was to restore the Kingdom, which he made no Claim or Pretension to; nor could any wise considerate Man at that Time think that any such Character could belong to him: But the divine irresistible Power of his Doctrines upon the Heart and Conscience, and the most exemplary Purity and Holiness of his Life, afforded a stronger Conviction of his being a true Prophet, and having Authority from God to preach such Doctrines, than all the Miracles in the World could have done, had they been Eye-Witnesses to them, as they were not. And when he was now pressed and importuned to shew some Sign, or work some Miracle, which, doubtless, they had heard much Talk of, by those who had proclaimed him King, he absolutely refused it; though one would think the Conviction of such Unbelievers required Miracles more than the Confirmation of those who were too strong Believers before, and whose Faith, as is very plain, had no good Foundation: Yet he is made to declare, that no Sign should be given, or Miracle wrought, for the Conviction of that *wicked and adulterous Generation, but the Sign of the Prophet* Jonah, *&c.* Which Passage in *Matthew*, as it stands in our present Gospel, seems plainly to have been an Interpolation, because it would be a Contra-

diction to the whole Hiſtory, as given by himſelf, and by all the other Evangeliſts. For Jeſus did not *continue three Days and three Nights in the Heart of the Earth, as* Jonah *had done in the Whale's Belly*; and that no other Sign ſhould be given, or Miracle wrought, to convince that *wicked Generation*, could not be true, if that *very Generation* had ſuch vaſt Numbers of the moſt aſtoniſhing Signs and Miracles to convince them, publickly done before their Eyes.

But if theſe Miracles prove any thing, they muſt prove that Jeſus was the Prophetic Meſſiah, or the King of *Iſrael*, and Founder of a glorious temporal Kingdom, according to the Prophets. For this they are all urged, and to this ſingle Purpoſe they were at firſt recorded and tranſmitted to us. This was the Faith of Healing, and no Man could have the Benefit of thoſe Cures without ſuch a Faith. And what that Faith was, or in what Senſe the diſtracted, miſguided Populace believed in him as the Meſſiah, is evident from their leading him in Triumph through the City, and proclaiming him King.

I had urged, that the prophetic Meſſiah of the *Jews* was to be a temporal Prince, and a great Conqueror; that he was to reſtore the Kingdom to the Houſe of *David*, and reeſtabliſh an univerſal Empire and Dominion over all Nations; which he could not poſſibly do without ſubduing the *Romans*, *Greeks*, *Egyptians*, and all Nations who held this People in Captivity. And I had compared this Kingdom of

the *Jewiſh* Meſſiah, with the Kingdom of Chriſt which was founded not in worldly Power and Dominion, but in Humility and Poverty, in Mortification, Self-denial, Perſecution, and many Tribulations, through which Men were to obtain, not worldly Wealth and Power, but a heavenly everlaſting Kingdom after a general Reſurrection, and final deciſive Judgment. And this, I thought, muſt be directly contray to any Meſſiaſhip or Kingdom, which the Prophets had ever mentioned one Word of.

But ſince you are pleaſed to blame me, *Euſebius*, as miſtaking, or miſrepreſenting, the Nature of this *Jewiſh* Meſſiaſhip and Kingdom, I muſt debate a Matter of ſuch Importance a little farther with you, eſpecially as I find this is a fundamental Point between you and me, and what muſt turn the Ballance of the whole Account, to one Side or the other.

The Prophet *Iſaiah*, in the ſixtieth Chapter of that Book, has collected and put together the whole Character of the Meſſiah, and Deſcription of his Kingdom, as it had been delivered occaſionally, and in part, by himſelf and other Prophets before this: And I think it is plain, from the Text and Context, that this Prophecy was delivered after the *Aſſyrian* Captivity of *Iſrael*. But as this is not very material, I ſhould not enter into any Diſpute about it, but hear what the State of that Nation was to be under the Meſſiah. *Lift up thine Eyes round about, and behold all theſe are gathered, and come to thee; thy Sons ſhall come from afar, and thy Daughters*

ſhall be nouriſhed at thy Side. Then thou ſhalt ſee and ſhine, thine Heart ſhall be aſtoniſhed and enlarged, becauſe the Fulneſs of the Sea ſhall be covered, and the Riches of the Gentiles *ſhall come unto thee: The Multitude of Camels ſhall cover thee, and the Dromedaries of* Midian *and of* Ephah; *all they of* Sheba *ſhall come; they ſhall bring Gold and Incenſe, and ſhew forth the Praiſes of the Lord. All the Sheep of* Kedar *ſhall be gathered unto thee, the Rams of* Nebaioth *ſhall ſerve thee; they ſhall come up to be accepted upon my Altar, and I will beautify the Houſe of my Glory.——Surely the Iſles ſhall wait for me, and the Ships of* Tarſhiſh *as at the Beginning, that they bring thy Sons from far, and their Silver and their Gold with them.——The Sons of Strangers ſhall build up thy Walls, and their Kings ſhall miniſter unto thee.——Thy Gates ſhall be open continually, neither Day nor Night ſhall they be ſhut, that they may bring unto thee the Riches of the* Gentiles, *and their Kings may be brought. For the Nation and Kingdom that will not ſerve thee ſhall periſh, and thoſe Nations ſhall be utterly deſtroyed.——The Sons alſo of them that afflicted thee ſhall come and bow unto thee, and all that deſpiſed thee ſhall fall down at the Soles of thy Feet, and ſhall call thee the City of the Lord,* Zion *the holy one of* Iſrael.——*Thou ſhalt alſo ſuck the Milk of the* Gentiles, *and ſuck the Breaſts of Kings——For Braſs will I bring Gold, and for Iron I will bring Silver, and for Wood Braſs, and for Stones Iron. I will alſo make thy Government Peace, and thy Exactors Righteouſneſs. Violence ſhall no more be*

heard

heard of within thy Land, neither Deſolation nor Deſtruction within thy Borders. But thou ſhalt call Salvation thy Walls, and Praiſe thy thy Gates. Thy People alſo ſhall be all righteous, they ſhall poſſeſs the Land for ever. Is this now, *Euſebius*, a Deſcription of the mortifying ſelf-denying State of the Church of Chriſt upon Earth; or are theſe the Trials, Temptations, Perſecutions, and various Exerciſes of Faith and Patience, by which Men muſt obtain the Kingdom of Heaven? To imagine or expect ſuch a State upon Earth would be the groſſeſt Enthuſiaſm, and to ſuppoſe or conceive of any ſuch State of Things in Heaven, muſt be abſurd and contradictory; and yet hard is the Caſe, your *School-Divinity* muſt force you, ſome Way or other, to apply all this to Chriſtianity, and the Goſpel-Diſpenſation; a higher State of temporal Felicity and Glory cannot be conceived or expreſſed, than what *Iſaiah* here deſcribes and promiſes with Regard to that Nation; nor could any thing be more ſuitable to their vain Hopes and carnal Wiſhes. But was that Prophet now living, and knew what had happened from that Time to this, in the Conduct of Providence, I believe he would give up all his Propheeies, and become a Chriſtian Deiſt. Time, *Euſebius*, is commonly thought to be the great Revealer of Secrets, and many Things are clear Day-light and Revelation to us now, that were all Myſtery and Darkneſs to former Ages. Could *Iſaiah* have foreſeen what would have happened to his Nation within a 1000

Years after his Death, I fancy he would ſcarce have flattered them with univerſal Empire, and a Dominion over the whole Earth; and to imagine him inſpired with the Knowledge of all Futurity to the End of the World, is a Point of Faith beyond my Reach, even though you ſhould reckon me an Infidel for it.

But the Truth is, that neither *Iſaiah*, nor any other Prophet, before or under the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, ever ſpoke one Word of a general Reſurrection, a final Judgment, and a conſequent future State of eternal Happineſs and Glory in Heaven, for good Men. They only propheſied of a more righteous Diſpenſation of Providence in future Generations, whatever might happen at preſent, and that God's Promiſe to *Abraham*, which they underſtood to be abſolute, would at laſt be made good to that Nation. But had they known, or believed, any thing of a future Recompence and Reward, they would not thus have comforted and buoyed up the Nation with the bare Hopes of better Times, and greater Proſperity to their Seed and Iſſue in future Generations, when they, who had ſuffered all, and lived in ſuch calamitous Times, were never to be the better for it. Had they believed a Reſurrection and future State of Retribution, they would never have influenced and impreſſed the People with ſuch vain wordly and carnal Hopes. They would doubtleſs have told them, directly and plainly, that whatever the Diſpenſation of Providence towards them might be in this Life, from firſt to laſt, yet they who retained

tained their Virtue and Fidelity, ſhould be abundantly recompenſed hereafter, by the future everlaſting heavenly Reward. But how their later Prophets, *Daniel* and *Eſdras*, came to take this into their Scheme, which had never been done before, and upon what Occaſion the *Jewiſh* Writers afterward are ſo plain and direct in it, might have remained a Myſtery, had not Dr *Hyde* given us ſo good an Account of the *Perſian* Religion, and did we not know that the *Jewiſh* Nation were ſubject to the *Perſians* for upwards of 200 Years. But I think I have ſaid enough to clear up this Matter, *Euſebius*, eſpecially to a Gentleman of your Learning and Diſcernment.

The Prophet *Daniel*, who was the laſt of the Canonical Scripture-Prophets, by at leaſt 100 Years, as I place it, ſuppoſes a general Reſurrection from the Dead, and a future State; but then he makes the temporal Kingdom, ſpoken of by the more antient Prophets, to precede it, and gives the Government of the World to his own Nation in the latter Days, when the Saints ſhould rule the Earth. And this Millenarian Scheme St *John* follows, with ſome Improvements, in his Apocalypſe, if he was the Author of that Book, as I preſume he was. But I hope, *Euſebius*, you will not put the Credit and Truth of Chriſtianity upon this Foot, and make what is to come a Proof of what is paſt; though I muſt own, that in one Part of your Book, you ſeem a little too much inclined to it: but this to me is plain, that the Miracles,

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as firſt induced, and urged by the original *Nazarene Jews*, either prove the temporal Kingdom of Chriſt, and the univerſal Empire and Dominion of that Nation, or elſe they prove nothing; and I bar your making the future Accompliſhment of this, a Proof of the Miracles themſelves.

St *Paul* I believe underſtood the Grounds and Principles of Chriſtianity, and where to fix the Proof of it, as well as any Man can do now. And yet in the ſeveral Defences and Apologies which he made for himſelf and his Religion before the *Roman* Judges, and in their open Courts, he does not mention one Word of Miracles wrought by Jeſus in his Life-time, or by himſelf and the other Apoſtles afterwards, but lays the whole and ſole Streſs upon the Reſurrection of Jeſus from the Dead, as a ſure Evidence that God had highly exalted him, and given him all Power of Judgment in the ſpiritual Kingdom. But had St *Paul* known then as much as we do now, he could not have omitted the Argument from the Miracles, to prove Chriſt's Meſſiaſhip, eſpecially when it was ſo directly to his Purpoſe, when he was under Safe-guard and Protection, and when he might boldly have appealed to the whole Country, both *Jews* and *Romans*, for the Truth, Certainty, and Notoriety of the Facts. But the Apoſtle knew very well, that this muſt have ruined the whole Cauſe, had he eſpouſed the Evidence of the *Jewiſh* Mob, or the Meſſiah-Men of that Age, who by leading Jeſus in

Triumph

Triumph through the City, and proclaiming him King, had ſet him up as a Prerender, and an Enemy to *Cæſar*, to whom he was now appealing. St *Paul* therefore took the right Way, and put the Proof of Chriſtianity, or of an univerſal ſpiritual Kingdom, upon the right Foot, and the only Foot that could ſupport it.

As ſoon as theſe *Nazarene Jews*, or Meſſiah-Men, underſtood that Jeſus was crucified and dead, they gave up all their Hopes in him, and Expectations from him. *We truſted this was the Man who ſhould have ſaved Iſrael*; but now it was all over. They had learned nothing from him as a Prophet or Preacher of Righteouſneſs, they knew no better than before how to obtain an heavenly Inheritance, but all their worldly Hopes were vaniſhed, the Kingdom was loſt, and nothing elſe could be worth ſaving. And hence, when the Women who went firſt to the Sepulchre, came and told them that Jeſus was riſen from the Dead and alive again, they looked upon it at firſt as a mere Imagination or idle Tale, and could not believe it. But as ſoon as they came to be convinced, they aſſumed their old Hopes and Prejudices again, and now he was the Meſſiah and Reſtorer of the Kingdom as before. But this does not well agree with the many plain, expreſs Declarations which Jeſus had made to them while he was living, and converſing among them, that he muſt die and ſhould riſe again on the third Day. However, I would not preſs you with this, *Euſebius*, the Phœnomenon is viſible

viſible enough, and every Man muſt ſee it in his own Light, and account for it as well as he can.

But now they immediately ſet themſelves to preach and proclaim him as the Meſſiah in their own national Senſe, and confined Salvation to this Name. There *was now no other Name given under Heaven by which Men could be ſaved.* And that they meant by this an actual explicit Faith in him, or that they who thus believed, and were baptized into his Name, ſhould be ſaved, and they who did not ſhould be damned, is too evident to need Proof. And you know, *Euſebius*, for I appeal to a very good Judge, that the primitive Catholics, or *Jewiſh* Hierarchy, all down, confined Salvation to their own Communion, or to the true viſible Church; and that they made Hereſy, Schiſm, or Epiſcopal Diſobedience, to be not only a damnable, but unpardonable Sin.

But it highly concerns every Chriſtian, and eſpecially every Chriſtian Divine, who is appointed to teach and inſtruct others, to diſtinguiſh well between *Religion* and *Superſtition*, and not to confound one with the other, which might make the beſt Religion in the World, the very worſt and moſt miſchievous, as has generally happened in Fact. And as the Chriſtian Religion is the moſt amiable and beneficent, ſo Chriſtian Superſtition is the moſt odious and deſtructive. Religion is clear and rational, pure and peaceable; but Superſtition is obſcure and ſenſitive, brutiſh and furious; the one, like the Sun,

Sun, diffuſes its vital Heat and Influences through the whole World; but the other is a baneful Poiſon extracted from the groſs Impurities of different Climates, and accommodated to the conſtitutional Weakneſs of this or the other Country; Religion warms the Heart by the Light of the Underſtanding, but Superſtition ſcorches and burns up the Soul with the dark Fire of ignorant blind Zeal. In ſhort, one is the Perfection and Beauty, and the other the Miſery and Shame of human Nature. But I would not have you think, *Euſebius*, that I am preaching; I troubled you with a long Sermon once in the *Moral Philoſopher*, but I ſhall never do it more.

Jeſus Chriſt came into the World to ſave Sinners, by reſtoring the true juſtifying, immortalizing Righteouſneſs, by which *Abraham*, *Noah*, *Enoch*, and all good Men, from the Beginning of the World, had been approved and accepted of God. And this I ſhould think of infinite Advantage to Mankind, ſo far as the Benefit extended. But this it ſeems will not do in *School-Divinity*. If you had loſt the Sun, you would not be at all be-friended by reſtoring and re-inſtating it in its Place again, unleſs you had a new Sun juſt created for you, that might be more luminous and glorious; or if you had loſt your Eye-ſight, it would be of no Advantage to you to cure your Blindneſs, and recover you to the natural Uſe of your Eyes, unleſs you could have new ſupernatural Senſe and Faculty of ſeeing given you. But I

ſhould

ſhould rather thank God for what I have, than pretend to what I have not, and cannot have. And this Affectation of ſupernatural Light, *Euſebius*, in my Opinion, is nothing but Darkneſs, and I muſt always think ſo, till you can make me wiſer. I am ſure, that I ſhould be very glad to receive any Knowledge or Inſtruction from you, and do not apprehend, that I have the leaſt Prejudice againſt being farther enlightened by ſo good a Friend. And though I have now but little more Time or Room to ſpare, and cannot enter far into Particulars, yet I hope to let you ſee that I am not obſtinately bent in Error.

You ſpend your firſt Chapter in a very laborious, and, as I ſhould think, needleſs Enquiry, into what I ſhould mean by the Moral Truth, Reaſon, and Fitneſs of Things. But I can aſſure you, that I meant the ſame Thing by it that Dr *Clarke* does, while he grounds the whole of Natural Religion upon this Principle; and you might certainly have taken it in the moſt extenſive Senſe, ſince I had made none of thoſe particular Diſtinctions and Reſtrictions which you have contrived and found out for me. I take every Thing to be morally true, reaſonable, and fit, whether in Principle or Practice, which by any rational Evidence to the Underſtanding, ariſing from different Relations and Circumſtances of Perſons and Things, ſhall appear to be connected with, and neceſſarily relative to, our moral Rectitude, Perfection, and true Happineſs. And it is hard to think,

think, *Eusebius*, that you should be so much at a Loss about my Meaning, while you argue so strenuously against it, and labour to prove that this Moral Truth, Reason, and Fitness, cannot be the only Criterion of true Religion, or of the Will of God, concerning our Duty and Happiness; nay, and while you would perswade us that this is properly no Mark or Criterion at all of divine Truth, or of Truth as coming from God. But you would not, I presume, have said so much against a Principle which you could not understand.

As to the other Criterion of divine Truth, and of Revelation above Reason, *i. e. Miracles*, which you set up in Opposition to the Nature, Reason, and Fitness of Things, as appearing to the Understanding, I think I have said enough to shew that it is utterly precarious; that we have no certain Rule of Judgment, whereby to distinguish a true Miracle from a false, or a Reality from a bare Appearance, and that abstracting from the Nature, Reason, and Fitness of the Things themselves, we may be liable in this Way to all the Deception and Delusion in the World. And though you have taken so much Pains to settle the Definition of a Miracle, and to correct the Mistakes of other learned Men about it; yet I must own myself as much at a Loss as ever, how to judge of Miracles, or how far such Proof is to be taken for the Truth of Doctrines above Reason. In my Opinion, *Eusebius*, we do not so much want the Definition of a Miracle, as some certain

tain Rule or Criterion of Judgment concerning it; and this I do not find that you can help us to. I take Mr *Locke*'s Definition of a Miracle to be the beſt that has hitherto been given, becauſe it is the only intelligible one, or the only one that we can apply, and judge of in Fact.

But I ſhall now ſuppoſe the Notion of Miracles, and its Uſe and Application in Practice, and to all the Ends and Purpoſes of Religion, to be perfectly well known and agreed upon; and that this Sort of Evidence is a clear, ſufficient, and unexceptionable Proof of the Truth of thoſe Doctrines and Principles, for which the Miracles are brought and urged, by the firſt Witneſſes and Vouchers. I hope this Suppoſition will be thought full and ample enough, and I chuſe to put it, *Euſebius*, to try what you can make of the Argument upon ſuch an Hypotheſis. Now upon this Suppoſition it muſt follow, that the Miracles were a clear, unexceptionable, and irrefragable Proof of the prophetic Meſſiaſhip of Jeſus; or that he was the Perſon, who was to bring about that glorious national Reſtoration, foretold by all their Prophets, and to which they had raiſed their Expectations: That this Jeſus of *Nazareth* was the Perſon who was to reſtore the Kingdom, to gather together and unite the Twelve ſcattered Tribes, and bring all Nations into their Intereſt, to rebuild the Temple in a more ſplendid magnificent Manner than ever, to reſtore their antient Prieſthood and Sacrifice, and

make

make this Law and Religion univerſal, to deſtroy any or every Nation who would not ſubmit to it, and thereby to ſpread Truth, and Peace, and Righteouſneſs, through the Earth, from this great King and governing People of *Iſrael*. This, Sir, was the Faith of the *Nazarene Jews*, or the Religion of the circumciſed Chriſtians in the Apoſtolic Age. For all which, beſides the 60th Chapter of *Iſaiah* already quoted, I would refer you to the 12 laſt Chapters of *Ezekiel*, where you have a full and plain Deſcription of the Glory and Magnificence of this Temple, Prieſthood, and whole Oeconomy, after this great prophetic national Reſtoration. And this Prophet does not deſcribe it in the common myſtical and viſionary Stile of Prophecy, but in plain intelligible Terms, as much as if it was an hiſtorical Relation of Things already paſt. This was the *Jewiſh* national Idea of the Meſſiaſhip, and the only Difference between the *Nazarene Jews* and the reſt, was upon the one ſingle Queſtion, whether Jeſus was this prophetic Meſſiah or not. But for any Thing elſe, the *Nazarenes* were as zealous for the whole Law, and as ſtiff Adherents to it, as the *Phariſees* themſelves. I think, *Euſebius*, I have plainly proved this in my foregoing Anſwer to *Sophronius*, and ſhall be ready to clear it up ſtill farther, and make it plainer, if poſſible, when called to it.

You ſeem to be aware, *Euſebius*, that if the Miracles, as induced and urged by the *Nazarene Jews*, do not prove the prophetic Meſſia-

ſhip of Jeſus, they can prove nothing at all as to Prophecy, or any Dependence of Chriſtianity upon *Judaiſm*. And therefore, in your 6th Chapter you undertake to *defend from various Cavils, and groſs Miſrepreſentations, the Character of Jeſus Chriſt, as the true Meſſiah of the antient Prophets.* This is doubtleſs a very material Point, and, in a Manner, the ſole Hinge of the Controverſy between you and me, and therefore I ſhall debate it the more diſtinctly and freely with you. I have now, I think, given the complete Character of the *Jewiſh* Meſſiah, according to the Prophets, which you had juſtly blamed me for not having done before; but having at laſt acquitted myſelf in this, I am the more at Leiſure to conſider what you have offered upon it.

You make *no Doubt, but great will be the Triumph of the* Jews *among us, who, at leaſt, ſhould return me their public Thanks for my eminent Service to their Cauſe againſt their Chriſtian Adverſaries.* I know not what you may do, *Euſebius*, but I believe moſt People would doubt very much of any Triumph from the *Jews*, upon any Conceſſions of the *Moral Philoſopher* in their Favour. They may triumph, perhaps, as they always have done, over ſuch Chriſtian *Jews*, as would pretend to convince and convert the *Moſaic* and prophetic *Jews* upon their own Principles; but I dare ſay, they will never triumph over Chriſtian Deiſts. And for my own Part, I can aſſure you, that I expect no Thanks from them for proving

their prophetic Meſſiaſhip to have been a national Deluſion from firſt to laſt, and that their Prieſthood and Sacrifices could be nothing elſe but Impoſture, Enthuſiaſm, Superſtition, and falſe Religion. The learned Men among us, who of late Years have attempted to defend the literal Accompliſhment of the Prophecies, have been ſo manifeſtly baffled and confounded, that I believe they have but little Inclination left to purſue the Argument much farther; and I can ſee no other Remedy, *Euſebius*, but that you muſt at laſt give up this modern literal Scheme, and, with the moſt antient Chriſtian *Jews*, found your Chriſtianity not upon *literal* but *myſtical Judaiſm*; and upon this Foot you might prove the Accompliſhment of the Prophecies, and extract the whole of Chriſtianity, or even the *Newtonian* Philoſophy, out of *Moſes* and the Prophets, if you pleaſed.

I had undertaken to prove, that Jeſus Chriſt, as the common Saviour of the World, by a new Law of his own, and independent of the Law of *Moſes*, was not the *Jewiſh* prophetic Meſſiah. And in order to prove this, I did not think it neceſſary to collect and put together every Thing out of the Prophets that related to their national Meſſiaſhip. I thought it ſufficient to my Purpoſe, if I could make it plainly appear, that any one eſſential Character of the Meſſiah, ſuch as ſhould be neceſſary and fundamental by the Conſent of all the Prophets, that any one ſuch Characteriſtic, I

ſay, did not belong to Jeſus, and that he had never aſſumed, but, on the contrary, renounced and diſclaimed it. And this, I think, *Euſebius*, I had proved before you eſpouſed the Cauſe, or knew any Thing at all of the Argument between *Theophanes* and me. I had made it evident, at leaſt to any Man of Learning and Underſtanding in the Scriptures, that the prophetic Meſſiah was to deliver the Nation from all their Captivity, Bondage, and Servitude, to collect and unite the ſcattered Tribes, and to reſtore the Temple, the Prieſthood, the Sacrifices, and the whole Oeconomy, in a more ſplendid and glorious Way than ever, and to extend this to all Nations. Now there is not one Word or Tittle of this that can agree to Chriſt and the Goſpel-Diſpenſation.

But, ſay you, the Character you here give of the *Jewiſh* Meſſiah is not the whole Character, Deſcription, or Definition of that Perſon, there are other Things mentioned of him beſides this. It may be ſo, and I never pretended otherwiſe. But this is an eſſential Part of that Character, Deſcription, or Definition; and no Perſon whatever, who does not anſwer to this, who never made any ſuch Pretenſions, but, on the contrary, diſavowed, diſclaimed, and renounced it all, can poſſibly be admitted as the *Jewiſh* prophetic Meſſiah. Here it is, *Euſebius*, that the Matter ſticks between you and me; this is the very Hinge or turning Point of the Controverſy; and therefore

therefore I am ſorry to find, that, in ſuch a Caſe, you ſhould think *Evaſion* more neceſſary than *Argument*. I might exemplify this evaſive Way of your's in ſome familiar Inſtances which I ſpare, as not being at all inclined to Ridicule, while I am talking with you. But this I muſt ſay, and, I hope, without Offence, that it is as impoſſible to prove a Perſon to be the *Jewiſh* prophetic Meſſiah, to whom the Characters I have mentioned do not agree, as it would be to prove any Creature to be a *Man* under moral Government, that is neither *rational* nor *riſible*.

The Paſſages you quote from *Iſaiah* and other Prophets, to prove the Univerſality of this Kingdom, and that the Meſſiah of the *Jews* ſhould extend his Dominion over all Nations, and bleſs them with Proſperity, Peace, and Righteouſneſs, from his own People *Iſrael*; theſe Paſſages, I ſay, do not in the leaſt contradict any Thing that I had ſaid, but farther confirms and ſtrengthens it. For ſtill this was to be a Temporal Kingdom, a Kingdom of this World, or a *Mohammedan* Paradiſe; and not one of the Prophets you refer to, ſpoke one Word of a future everlaſting Kingdom of Glory, to be obtained by Sufferings, Afflictions, and the various Exerciſes and Trials of Faith and Patience in this Life. You ſeem willing to perſwade me, that the Prophets preached the Goſpel, and that *Iſaiah* eſpecially preached Chriſt, and the Nature of his Kingdom, as much as St *Paul*. But all this is

to me mere Imagination, and you might as well tell me that *Isaiah* taught the Arithmetic of Infinites, or the Doctrine of Fluxions, since his Kingdom of the Messiah has no more Relation than that to the Church of Christ, and the Kingdom of Heaven. Nay this Kingdom of the *Jewish* Messiah, as described by the Prophets, is directly opposite to the Church of Christ upon Earth, as preparatory to the Kingdom of Heaven, which Geometry and Algebra are not. But *School-Divinity*, I find, is a Science not to be understood by any but Critics and Metaphysicians.

You are so loth to give up the Prophets, and their temporal Paradise upon Earth, that you seem rather inclined to think that all this is yet to come, and must be accomplished in the latter Days, and final Period of the Christian Church. The Kingdom must yet be restored to *Israel*, together with their Law, their Temple, their Priesthood, and their Sacrifices, and all Nations must receive the true Religion, the Knowledge of the true God, and the right Way to Salvation from them at last, according to *Isaiah*, *Ezekiel*, and their other Prophets. That nothing of all this is yet past, is very certain, and that it is future, I am sure, cannot be proved; nor is such a Supposition consistent with any Principle of Reason, with the Revelation of Jesus Christ in the Gospel, or with the Conduct of Providence from first to last. Could you convince the *Jews* that Jesus whom they crucified would at last bring about such

ſuch a Revolution in their Favour, no doubt but they would all embrace Chriſtianity. But inſtead of that, you only ſet them a laughing, and confirm them the more in their Infidelity.

You afterwards give us a Liſt of about thirty *Jews* converted to Chriſtianity, to ſhew that I was miſtaken in ſaying it is impoſſible to convince the *Jews* upon *Jewiſh* Principles. But I did not pretend that no *Jews* could ever be brought to profeſs Chriſtianity upon ſome Motives or other, either of Conviction or Intereſt; and where there is nothing of Intereſt in the Caſe, Men often change their Religion upon falſe Principles, as when Proteſtants turn Papiſts, or the like. But when I ſaid the *Jews* could never be convinced upon *Jewiſh* Principles, my Meaning was, that it is impoſſible ever to reconcile the *Jewiſh* and Chriſtian Principles about the Meſſiah, and that if one be true, the other muſt be falſe; and conſequently that no *Jew* can rationally and conſiſtently embrace Chriſtianity upon the Foot of *Moſes* and the Prophets. And this, *Euſebius*, I think, I have proved, at leaſt we have had the Experience of 1700 Years; while, under the Light of the Goſpel, and all the Labours of the moſt learned Chriſtians, that People ſtill continue under their Unbelief, and deriding the ſtrange Uſe and Application which we make of their Prophecies. I may ſay therefore, that their Converſion upon ſuch Principles is impracticable, as all Experience has teſtified.

I believe no *Jew* ever became a Chriſtian, but on a Suppoſition that the Prophecies which are not yet fulfilled, ſhall ſome Time or other be made good to that Nation. But he who ſhould undertake to prove this, muſt be either a Perſon of great Subtilty and Acumen himſelf, or have a very weak Man to deal with. There is nothing in our Goſpels, or Epiſtles, that can give us the leaſt Reaſon to expect ſuch a temporal Kingdom, or earthly Paradiſe, as the Prophets deſcribe. When Jeſus ſaw that he could not bring that Nation to Repentance, that the Multitude followed him only for the Loaves and Fiſhes to fill their Bellies, and to hear good News of better Times, while they had no ſpiritual Senſe or Feeling, no Hunger or Thirſt after Righteouſneſs, he gave them up as incurable, and as utterly loſt and abandoned, as a Nation or People; and accordingly he pronounced their final Diſſolution, and the utter Deſtruction of their City, and Temple, and whole Polity, without the leaſt Hint or Intimation of their ever being recalled, or made a People more. He wept and lamented over *Jeruſalem*, wiſhing *ſhe had known in this her Day*, this her laſt Day of Trial, *the Things which belonged to her Peace, but now they were for ever hid from her Eyes.* And when he gives an Account of his ſecond Coming, it was to raiſe the Dead, to paſs the final Sentence, to receive the Righteous into his heavenly everlaſting Kingdom, and to Doom the Wicked to utter Deſtruction and

Perdition; and not reſtore the Kingdom to *Iſrael*, to rebuild the Temple, and to extend the Dominion of that Nation over the whole World, which was the vain Hope and Expectation the antient Prophets had raiſed them to, and which had all along turned the Heads and blinded the Eyes of that whole Nation. And though ſome *Jews*, here and there one in an Age, have been brought over, upon this Hope and Expectation confirmed to them by the Chriſtians from their own Books, yet ſuch Inſtances have been very rare; and, generally ſpeaking, ſome other Motives for it have appeared, beſides a real rational Conviction. But could you bring your Liſt of *Jews* converted upon ſuch a Principle to ſeveral Hundreds, *Euſebius*, as you ſay you could; this would be no Argument at all againſt me, unleſs you could ſet aſide what I have offered againſt the prophetic Meſſiaſhip; and for one *Jew* converted to Chriſtianity, I might undertake to give you a thouſand Chriſtians embracing the Faith of *Mohammed*. Where is now the Chriſtianity of the whole Eaſtern *Roman* Empire, both in *Greece* and *Aſia?* Dean *Prideaux* had once intended to write the Hiſtory of that ſtrange Revolution and Apoſtacy to *Mohammediſm*, but he dropped the Deſign, as being loth to revive the Diſtractions and Diſputes about Revelation, which had occaſioned it. The ſharp uncharitable Diſputes about the Trinity, Incarnation, Hypoſtatical Union, and the Diſtinction of Subſtances, Perſons, Natures, *&c.* had

had divided, inflamed, and torn to Pieces those Eastern Churches, so that they easily embraced another Religion that was less mysterious, and that would sit easier upon their Understandings. The Belief of one God, and one Prophet, as the Revealer and Declarer of his Will, was but a short Creed, which had nothing mysterious in it. And this being once professed, there was nothing else left to be contended and wrangled about. This Prophet, tho' an Impostor, was a Man of a great Genius and deep Penetration, and therefore took effectual Care to prevent all such Distractions, Contentions, and Divisions about Mysteries, and Things above Reason, which he saw had ruined the Christians.

Nothing but the pretended Mysteriousness of Christianity, as a Revelation above Reason, could have prevented its farther Propagation, and more general Reception; and nothing else could have occasioned the Fall of the Eastern Churches, and the sudden Rise of *Mohammedism* upon it. It may here, perhaps, be objected, that *Mohammed* propagated his Religion by the Power of the Sword, and that the Christians were forced into it; but nothing can be more false than this. It is true, he demolished and destroyed all Idols, and would not suffer Idolatry in his Dominions; but then he tolerated all the Worshippers of the one true God, the *Jews*, the *Magians*, and the Christians; and they are tolerated in all the *Mohammedan* Countries to this Day. There are vast

Numbers

Numbers of *Jews* now in *Conſtantinople*, the Metropolis of the Empire, and 9000 of them are ſaid to be carried off by the Plague this laſt Year; and the Chriſtians, in all Parts of that vaſt Empire, are much more numerous.

But now I am talking of *Mohammed*, I muſt beg Leave, *Euſebius*, to make a little farther Digreſſion, as I am no Friend to Myſtery or Revelation, above Reaſon, of any Sort. It is then I think, plain from the Koran, commonly called the Alcoran, that this Impoſtor had made himſelf Maſter of the Oriental Languages, and that he very well underſtood the main Principles, Nature, and Genius, of the three moſt famous and extenſive Religions, or Schemes of Revelation, at that Time; namely, the *Jewiſh*, the *Magian*, and the Chriſtian Revelations. He had ſufficient Opportunities for this in the Space of 23 Years; during which Time he had been employed in merchandizing through *Perſia*, *Arabia*, *Syria*, and *Egypt*, before he came to the Age of forty, when he opened his Commiſſion as a Prophet. But the Impoſtor kept all this acquired Knowledge to himſelf, and pretended to be perfectly ignorant and illiterate, and that he knew nothing, in a natural or acquired Way, of the Learning, Religion, or Languages of *Aſia* at that Time, excepting his own native Tongue; and as to this too, he had never learned to read or write. And herein lay the whole Depth and Strength of the Impoſtor. For admitting this to be true, it would be the ſtrongeſt Proof of Inſpiration, Revelation, or ſupernatural

ſupernatural Aſſiſtance that ever had been given in the World, or that could be given. For it is allowed by all the learned Critics, that his Book is the Teſt and Standard of the Purity, Sublimity, Elegance, and Oratory of the *Arabic* Language, and it gained that Approbation and Character among the moſt learend and celebrated Philoſophers and Orators in *Arabia* at that Time, though they were all Idolaters, and the moſt bitter Enemies to *Mohammed* and his Doctrine of one God. And therefore to ſuppoſe that *Mohammed* ſhould arrive to all this Perfection of Language, Oratory, and Philophy, and be able to compoſe a Book out of all the revealed Religions then known in the World, by a Confederacy with ſome mean infamous Apoſtates and Fugitives, without knowing any thing of the Matter himſelf, is the moſt improbable and incredible Thing in the World. And I was ſurprized to find Dean *Prideaux*, among others, to run into this weak indefenſible Notion; a Suppoſition which has given the *Mohammedans* greater Strength and Triumph than any thing elſe could have done, unleſs the *Jews* and Chriſtians had owned him to be a true Prophet, and that he had it all by Inſpiration, immediate Revelation, or ſupernatural Aſſiſtance from God. For a Perſon of ſuch extraordinary Abilities and extenſive Knowledge of the World, without any ſupernatural Aſſiſtance, cannot be produced either on the *Jewiſh* or Chriſtian Side.

This

This Impoſtor took from *Moſes* and the *Jews* his Notions of Inſpiration, immediate Revelation, and familiar Converſe and Intercourſe with God and Angels; his abſolute Decrees, and Covenant of Peculiarity with God's true, faithful, viſible, and Catholic Church; the divine Appointment of Circumciſion, as the outward viſible Mark of this national Election and true viſible Church; and the Multiplicity of Wives and Concubines, with the divine Right of arbitrary Divorcements. But as to this laſt, he reformed very much upon *Moſes*, and mitigated the unnatural Rigour of his Law, by limiting the Number of Wives and Concubines; and allowing, in moſt ordinary Caſes, an Appeal in Favour of the Woman, which *Moſes* had not done.

From *Zoroaſter* he borrowed his Account and Deſcription of Paradiſe, and the bodily or ſenſitive Joys and Pleaſures of the Bleſſed after Death, with the Bodily Pains and Tortures of the Wicked when the Soul was ſeparated from the Body, and they had no Body to enjoy or ſuffer in, or any bodily Organs to act by; and from this Fountain likewiſe he drew his temporal and eternal Puniſhments of wicked Men after Death. Some were to be puniſhed for a longer, and others for a ſhorter Time; but all common Sinners were to be delivered and reſtored to Happineſs at the Reſurrection; while Idolaters, Infidels, and Apoſtates from the true Faith, were to remain in Hell, or a State of Puniſhment, for ever, or to all Eternity. And theſe Notions the *Jews* had taken

taken from *Zoroaſter* and the *Perſians* many hundred Yeas before, or in the Days of *Zoroaſter* himſelf, who lived almoſt a thouſand Years before *Mohammed.* Wicked immoral *Jews* were to be puniſhed for a certain Time, and then to be reſtored, provided they had died in the true Faith; but Idolaters, Infidels, and Apoſtates, were to be puniſhed for ever; and this Puniſhment could never be remitted or taken off, *either in this World, or in the World to come.*

This Impoſtor likewiſe went ſo far with the Chriſtians, as to take many Things from them, and to own Jeſus Chriſt to be a true Prophet ſent from God, to ſuppreſs Idolatry and reform the World: But at the ſame Time he charged the Chriſtians home as having corrupted their Religion, and recorded many Things of their Prophet which he never could have deliverd or intended. And though the Chriſtians at that Time might be thought to worſhip three Gods, yet as they all declared againſt it, and profeſſed to worſhip only the one true God, *Mohammed* did not conſign them over to eternal Torments, but yet made their Puniſhment greater and more laſting than that of the *Jews* and *Magians*, who worſhipped the true God without any Suſpicion of Idolatry. The Impoſtor could but juſt acquit the Chriſtians of that Time, from the Charge and Puniſhment of Idolatry and Polytheiſm, and which he thought a Matter of great Favour to them. But he had taken enough from *Moſes* and *Zoroaſter* before, to mar and corrupt the true,

pure,

pure, and original Doctrines of Chriſt and the Goſpel, and to compound a Religion of his own, conſiſting of a ſtrange Mixture of Truth and Falſhood blended together in human Policy. But however falſe his Religion might be, as it certainly was a falſe Religion, yet the Event has proved that his Politics were right, and that he contrived the beſt Scheme of Superſtition that ever was invented, which, I hope, *Euſebius*, our Friend *Warburton* will conſider. But I am fully ſatisfied, for my own Part, that Jeſus Chriſt and St *Paul* never annexed the Sanctions of eternal Life and Death, to any Method or Scheme of external political Obedience or Superſtition whatever. Our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, and his beſt and only Expoſitor and Interpreter St *Paul*, always affixed the Sanctions of Religion to the inward, ſpiritual, and divine Temper; and he who does otherwiſe, gives the plain Marks and Characteriſtics of Impoſture or Enthuſiaſm, and confounds *Religion* with Superſtition. To place *Religion* either in doubtful diſputable Speculations and Opinions, or in external Rites, Ceremonies, and Modes of Worſhip, which have no Relation to, or Connexion with, moral Rectitude and true Goodneſs, is the very Eſſence of *Superſtition*; and has proved the Ground of all the Flames and Diviſions, Plagues and Miſeries, which have been brought upon the Chriſtian World, about what has been weakly or wickedly called *Chriſtianity* and *Revealed Religion*.

I have

I have given this ſhort Account of theſe three different Schemes of Revealed Religion, that the common Reader may be the better able to compare and judge of them; and how far they either agree with, or differ from, the Chriſtian Revelation, as you repreſent it. You have undertaken, *Euſebius*, to give us in a diſtinct categorical Liſt of revealed Fundamentals, or the Fundamentals of Revelation as diſtinguiſhed from the Religion of Nature or moral Principles of Reaſon. I am the more obliged to you for this, and under the moſt ſpecial Engagement to conſider it, as it is what no learned Divine, that I know of, would ever undertake before. The learned *Chillingworth* could never be prevailed on to do it, though ſo much tempted and provoked to it by his Adverſary; for he knew that he could not fix upon any two diſtinct Principles of Chriſtianity, but what Proteſtants themſelves would differ in, when once it came to be limited to any one certain determinate Senſe; and nothing can be fundamental to Chriſtianity, that is doubted of and diſputed among Chriſtians themſelves, as nothing could be fundamental to Proteſtantiſm that Proteſtants are not agreed in; and ſurely that can never be a fundamental, or an eſſential diſtinguiſhing Part of Chriſtianity as ſuch, which does not diſtinguiſh Chriſtianity from any other Religion. But, *pag.* 428, you reduce theſe doctrinal fundamental Points of Chriſtianity, Revelation above Reaſon, or *Poſitive Religion*, to five general Heads, which I ſhall diſtinctly conſider.

The

The first and the most material is this: "*As* " *to Doctrines and Principles* peculiar to it, such " is the Doctrine of one Mediator between " God and Man, Christ Jesus the blessed Mes- " siah and Son of God, by whose Merits, Inter- " cession, and Atonement, we obtain Remis- " sion of our Sins, and eternal Life and Happi- " ness." You must needs know, *Eusebius*, that these Words, *Mediation*, *Merit*, *Intercession*, *Atonement*, *Remission of Sins*, &c. are Terms of a very general, doubtful, and indeterminate Signification. To represent all the different Constructions that have been put upon them, and the Disputes raised about them, by the different and opposite Parties and Factions among Christians, would require a distinct Treatise. The two most opposite Factions, the *Antinomians* and *Socinians*, will allow you the general Scripture Words and Phrases; and if the Doctrine consisted in that, they must be all agreed, all equally good Christians; and farther than this, you have said nothing of the Matter. I had offered a great deal against the common, sacrificial, vicarious Scheme, as contrary to Reason and Scripture, and as having no Foundation, even in the Law of *Moses*. And what I had here offered must still hold good, for any thing you have brought or urged to the contrary.

Another fundamental Doctrine you mention, is, " of a Covenant between God and Man, " offering and insuring to Mankind, by ex- " press Stipulation, certain Benefits and Privi- " leges of the highest Importance, on our due " Performance of certain Conditions." But

what thoſe *certain Conditions* are, which are the fundamental Articles of this *expreſs Covenant* between God and Man, you cannot ſay, and I believe you would not find any two learned Divines in *England* agreed about it. But here you are ſtill bringing in your Fundamentals of *Poſitive Religion*, without being able to clear up any one of them; for though you ſeem condeſcending to ſome Paticulars, yet you leave them in ſuch a general indefinite Way, as not to make yourſelf accountable for any one clear determinate Propoſition about it: and this, ſurely, is an eaſy Way of being an orthodox Chriſtian, and an able Divine, by uſing Words without Meaning, and leaving the Senſe to ſhift for itſelf.

The *Moral Philoſopher* addreſſes the Deity with a firm and full Truſt in, and Dependence on, him, as his Creator, Preſerver, Protector, Guardian, and ſupreme Good. And this he does, perhaps, upon ſurer Grounds of paternal and filial Relation, than any verbal or written Covenant could amount to. I take it for granted, that this Way of repreſenting Things in Scripture is founded in the eternal, neceſſary, and immutable Reaſon of Things, and that thoſe whoſe Underſtanding God had thus far enlightened, and whom he had raiſed up for that Purpoſe, were perfectly in the right, when they repreſented the moſt neceſſary eternal Truth in this poſitive authoritative Way. They had better Authority from God for doing this, than if an Angel had ſpoke to them, or they had concluded

cluded it from any extraordinary ſenſible Appearances, in which they might have been very liable to Deception. St *Paul* has largely proved, that the Covenant of Faith and Righteouſneſs which God made with *Abraham*, was in him to all Mankind, or with all Believers, who ſhould come up to *Abraham*'s fiducial Truſt and filial Obedience; and nothing can be more clearly written in Nature and Reaſon than this, that where Man is a dutiful and obedient Son, God will be a true Friend and moſt gracious Father; and that he will never fail or forſake thoſe who filially love, and fear, and fiducially truſt, in him. No Scripture, no Faith in Miracles, or ſenſible Appearances, how extraordinary ſo ever, can be clearer, or ſo clear as this, for it is written in the moſt legible indelible Characters through all Nature.

A third fundamental of Poſitive Religion which you mention, is, "the Doctrine of a *Father*, "*Son*, and *holy Spirit*, all plainly repreſented in "Scripture as divine in Nature, and concur-"ring reſpectively and eminently in the great "Work of our Redemption, and therefore pro-"poſed all as the high Objects of our Faith and "Worſhip." This Doctrine of three Perſons, in the ſupreme Deity, in three diſtinct though not ſeparate Creators, Governors, and Redeemers of the World, who are all equally the Objects of ſupreme Adoration and Worſhip, has lately been ſo much diſputed, and Dr *Waterland*, the great modern Patron and Defender of it, has fared ſo ill in the Controverſy, that I was ſur-

prized to find you mention it as a Fundamental, without conſidering how great a Part of the Nation, and even of your own learned Divines, you unchriſten at once. Dr *Clarke*, indeed, to whom you here refer, allowed, or ſuppoſed the *Perſonality* of the Spirit or Holy Ghoſt; but this he did upon very ſlight Evidence, and he might as well have made diſtinct Perſons of Sin, Death, and Hell, of the good and bad Spirit, Temper, and Diſpoſition in Man, or even the Heavens and Earth diſtinct perſonal Agents; for under ſuch perſonal Terms they are often repreſented and ſpoken of: But Dr *Bennet*, you know, who was a very learned Divine, denies the Perſonality of the Spirit, and argues ſtrenuouſly againſt it. And whenever you ſhall think fit, *Euſebius*, to engage in this Argument, and undertake to prove the diſtinct Perſonality and Agency of the Spirit, I believe you will have no Reaſon to boaſt much of your Succeſs in the Controverſy. It could be to no good Purpoſe now, to renew a Controverſy about a Point that has been ſufficiently canvaſſed already; but I think you ought not to have made ſo dark and diſputable a Doctrine fundamental and eſſential to Chriſtianity; and I hope you will not pretend to prove, that upon ſuch a Teſt as this, the *Nicene* Fathers could be Chriſtians.

Your next Fundamental of *Poſitive Religion*, is, " the Doctrine of extraordinary Aids and " Grace *from the holy Spirit*, conferred on all " true and ſincere Believers, in Conſequence of " Chriſt's

" Chriſt's Aſcenſion into Heaven, and Entrance " into his glorious Kingdom." You here repreſent the Spirit as an *Agent*, as aiding, aſſiſting, and giving Grace, *&c.* without any real Foundation in Scripture, that I know of. The *Holy Ghoſt*, or the *Spirit*, is always repreſented and ſpoken of as the Thing given, and is put for ſome Power or Gift from God, either ordinary or extraordinary, but never as the Giver or Beſtower of itſelf. God has promiſed to give his holy Spirit to thoſe who aſk and ſeek it, *i. e.* the Spirit of Peace and Love, Truth and Righteouſneſs, or the inward ſpiritual and divine Temper: And I believe wherever the Word Spirit or Holy Ghoſt is mentioned, it always ſignifies ſome Effect or Manifeſtation of God's Power, either ordinary or extraordinary, and is never, in a ſtrict and proper Senſe, taken perſonally; but I would not diſpute with you much about *Fundamentals*. But ſurely all Mankind, Heathens, *Jews*, or Chriſtians, who have ever believed in or worſhipped the true God at all, have prayed to him, and depended on him, for his Aid and Aſſiſtance, for the Practice of Virtue and true Religion, or for working them up into the divine Spirit and Temper; and this Hope or Dependence is fundamental to all Religion, even to the Religion of Nature, and cannot be peculiar to Chriſtianity.

The laſt Fundamental you mention, is the Doctrine of the *Reſurrection*; but you were very ſenſible that this is no peculiar Doctrine of Chriſtianity, and that it cannot diſtinguiſh

Chriſtians from *Jews*, *Magians*, or *Mohammedans*; the two former of which had received and plainly taught this Doctrine long before Chriſt's Time. You were ſo well aware of this, that you endeavour to turn it off, by a long marginal Note; in which you obſerve, that *Zoroaſter* having been of *Jewiſh* Extraction, before he ſet up his *Jewiſh* Religion in *Perſia*, the *Perſians* might probably receive this Doctrine from the *Jews*, and not the *Jews* from them. But the contrary, I think, appears very plainly: *Zoroaſter* was not originally of *Jewiſh*, but of *Perſian* Extraction; he was a Deſcendent of thoſe People whom *Aſarhaddon* the Great had placed in and about *Samaria*, in the Room of the ten Tribes that his Grandfather *Shalmaneſer* had carried away Captive; and theſe *Cuthites*, afterwards called *Samaritans*, were tranſplanted out of the remoter Northern Provinces of *Perſia*. If the *Jews* therefore had any Notion of a Reſurrection, and a future State before the Riſe of the *Perſian* Monarchy, it muſt have been at this Time, from thoſe Strangers who came and ſettled among them; but it does not appear, that they had ſo ſoon; for there is no *Jewiſh* Writer, Prophet, or Hiſtorian, that mentions any thing of thoſe Doctrines, till that Nation came to be ſubject to the *Perſians*. *Iſaiah* was living at the *Aſſyrian* Captivity, and ſurvived that Captivity above 30 Years: And though he gives ſo large an Account of the Meſſiaſhip, and the glorious temporal Kingdom, or earthly Paradiſe that Nation was to expect,

expect, yet he says not one Word of a Resurrection from the Dead, or any future everlasting State of Glory and Happiness, as a Reward for the Sufferings and Afflictions of this Life: But in the Days of *Zoroaster*, and under the *Persian* Empire, the *Jews* received those Doctrines of a Resurrection and a future State, as is plain from the Prophets *Daniel* and *Esdras*, who lived at that Time; and all their After-Historians and Writers who speak of it as generally received, and in as plain express Terms as the New Testament itself does.

That *Zoroaster* did not introduce those Doctrines in *Persia*, but found them there, is as plain from Dr *Hyde*, and the Authorities which he quotes, as any thing can be. The Truth is, that *Zoroaster* rather corrupted than reformed the *Persian* Religion; he introduced among them the *Jewish* Scheme of Priesthood and Temple-Worship, which the *Persians* had never had before. The Orders he established among the *Magians* were exactly conformable to the *Mosaic* or *Jewish* Oeconomy of a High-Priest, chief Priests, common Priests, and *Levites*; though he could not confine this Priesthood to any one particular Tribe or Family, nor ever make it hereditary, but he carried the Superstition of *holy Fire*, or Fire lighted in the Sunbeams, beyond whatever *Moses* and the *Jews* had done; for he not only ordered it to be kept always burning in the Temples, which were then first built in *Persia*, but in every private Family Night and Day; and he was sollicitous about nothing more than having these Fires al-

ways kept in by Candle-light, or otherwiſe: And he inſtituted a great and peculiar Reward, for thoſe who took Care of it, never to let the holy Fire go out Day or Night, in any Houſe or Family. But I have ſaid enough, I think here and elſewhere, to ſhew, that the Doctrines of a Reſurrection of the Body, and of a future State of bodily Rewards and Puniſhments, Pleaſures and Pains after Death, was not of *Jewiſh* and much leſs of Chriſtian Original and Extraction. I can trace this Doctrine no higher than the *Medes* and *Perſians*, who pretended to have received it from *Abraham*; but when or from whom they received it, would, I doubt, be in vain to enquire now. This is certain, that the antient *Egyptians*, *Greeks*, and *Romans*, believed the Immortality of the Soul, as did the *Eſſenes* among the *Jews*, but not the Reſurrection of the Body; they kept up, however, the Notion of future Rewards and Puniſhments, and believed this to be abſolutely neceſſary to the Peace and Well-being of Society; and this ſhews that ſuch a Principle is neceſſary to the good of Society, and gives one a ſtrong Proof, that it is really true, and that God does not govern the World by Deception. But how our Friend *Warburton*, *Euſebius*, will come off upon this Principle, with his divine Legation of *Moſes*, muſt be left to Time and his further Reaſonings: But this I think is plain, that you have left that Argument to him, which you might very well do, as he had undertaken it before you. He has bid an open Defiance to

all Deiſts and Free-Thinkers, who pretend to any Thing of Wit or good Humour in Religion, which he mortally hates. He is ſo kind as to offer his Aſſiſtance to open our Eyes, and to let us ſee ſomething of Truth and Reaſon, which we could never do till his Book came out; and therefore, we hope, he will come to his Subject in the next Volume, which he has ſaid nothing to yet. But doubtleſs he has ſomething in Reſerve, that we are ſhortly to ſee and feel too.

But the Queſtion, *Euſebius*, will ſtill return upon you, what is this Revelation above Reaſon, or what are thoſe ſuper-rational, unſearchable, or uninveſtigable Doctrines, which the Miracles were wrought to prove? This is the Gordian Knot which you ſtill leave as faſt and indiſſoluble as ever. And while you refer to what other learned Men have ſaid about it, only to evade the Argument yourſelf, you are doing juſt nothing. It is very plain, that the grand Point which the Miracles were brought and urged for by the *Nazarene Jews*, was the prophetic Meſſiaſhip of Jeſus. This was the one and only Matter of Faith or Practice in which the *Nazarenes* differed from the reſt, and particularly the *Phariſees*; and as to any Thing elſe, they never changed their Religion. You cannot but know that the prophetic Meſſiah was to reſtore the Kingdom, with the Temple, Prieſthood, and Sacrifices, in all their Glory; to extend his Dominion over all Nations, and to diffuſe Truth and Righteouſneſs,

neſs, Peace and Proſperity, through the Earth, from this his own peculiar People, for there could be no Salvation, no Bleſſings from God to other Nations, *but of the Jews*, from whom the Meſſiah was to ſpring, and among whom he was thus to extend his Kingdom. I have here mentioned nothing but what is an eſſential Part of this Character, and when you can prove that all this belonged to him, and was claimed by him, that he made good ſome Part of it while he lived, and promiſed to accompliſh all the reſt at his ſecond Coming, you will then, doubtleſs, convert the *Jews*, and bring the Chriſtian Argument upon them, with more Weight and Force than ever they have felt it hitherto.

As Miracles are intended to prove Things above all human Reaſon, ſo it is an Evidence which no human Reaſon can judge of. The Senſes can only judge of Miracles and Supernatural Facts, in which they are moſt of all liable to Deception; and therefore all Defects of Underſtanding, all Ignorance of natural Cauſes, and all miſtaken Facts have been ever put to this Account. If a Fact is miſtaken, or cannot be accounted for, ſuppoſing it true, it is certainly a Miracle with him who miſtakes it, or cannot naturally account for it. But ſurely as this is an Evidence or Sort of Proof which Reaſon cannot judge of, it can have no natural or rational Connexion with any *doctrinal Truth*. If the *Nazarene Jews*, or the Apoſtles and Diſciples themſelves aimed

at

at proving any Thing by the Miracles, it was certainly their temporal Kingdom or prophetic Meſſiaſhip; and therefore, when they had given up this national prophetic Faith and Truſt, they had no farther Hope or Expectation from him, till the ſame Preſumption and groundleſs Confidence came to be revived again. But your ſaying nothing directly to this, *Euſebius*, and labouring ſo much to evade it, if I was not otherwiſe fully ſatisfied of your Integrity, would look like flying in the Face of *Scripture*, and reſolving to maintain a Syſtem of *School-Divinity* againſt it. Mr *Locke* in his *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity*, has proved, that the one ſingle Point, as a Matter of Faith which the Apoſtles preached in and about *Judea*, after the Reſurrection, was this, that Jeſus was the true Meſſiah, according to the Prophets: And, I think, I have proved that our Jeſus, or the true Chriſtian Meſſiah, and Saviour of the World, never claimed that grand eſſential Character, of being the temporal Reſtorer and Deliverer of that Nation, and that he never promiſed any ſuch Thing to bring it about, either then, or at any other Time. And if you would ſpeak plainly and directly to this, *Euſebius*, I ſhould be glad to hear from you again very ſpeedily, and without loſing much Time. Truth you know is never backward to ſhow herſelf; ſhe loves and ſeeks the Light, and needs no Put-offs or Evaſions.

But I had quite miſtaken, it ſeems, the Nature of the Argument from Prophecy. And

muſt own, *Euſebius*, ſuch is my Dulneſs, that I have received no farther Information from all that you have offered to this Purpoſe. I can ſee nothing that Prophecy can prove by the Accompliſhment, but that the Thing was foreknown. And it is plain to me, that the Prophets did not foreſee Chriſt, or the Nature of his Kingdom. Chriſt himſelf was ſo far from giving them any Hope or Expectation of their prophetic Kingdom, that on the contrary he pronounced the utter Deſtruction of the Nation, with their Temple and Prieſthood, without any the leaſt Intimation of their ever being reſtored more, or brought together again as a People. I had put the Caſe, that any perſonal Character, good or bad, had been punctually and circumſtantially foretold, as ſuppoſe of *Chriſt*, *Mohammed*, or the *Pope*. And then I obſerved, that nothing could be concluded from hence, but that theſe Things were foreknown, and that God had communicated it to Men; and conſequently that the World is governed by a ſpecial Providence, or by Thought, Wiſdom, Contrivance, and Deſign, and that every Thing does not come about from neceſſary Mechanical Cauſes. But you ſay, *page* 133, *Here*, Philalethes, *you miſtake or diſguiſe in every Part the Argument, that is uſually drawn from Prophecy. And really there is ſo much Error and Confuſion, and ſo little pertinent Truth in the whole Paſſage, that I could hardly believe* Philalethes *to be the Author of it.* This is indeed a very civil Rebuke, but you

you will give me leave, *Euſebius*, to examine the Ground of it. And here I have no Intention to enter into any Controverſy with you about the Neceſſity and Contingency of Actions, which would carry us quite off from the main Point. You could not ſurely imagine, that I deſigned to aſſert the natural, mechanical Neceſſity of Actions by any external Force or Compulſion, which would be abſolutely inconſiſtent with the Idea of Will or Choice. The free Actions of Men, or what comes about by Will or Choice, cannot depend on any ſuch natural, extrinſick, neceſſary Cauſes, by which one might predict an Eclipſe of the Sun or Moon. But then the free Actions of Men, Will, or Choice, are ſubject to certain general Laws, Limitations, or Conditions of Action, as much as the Motion of the Sun and Moon; and it would be as abſurd and contradictory to ſuppoſe a Man to will or chuſe Evil abſolutely, and as ſuch, as it would be to ſuppoſe a Body to move in a Direction contrary to the impreſſed moving Force. The Choice of Evil as ſuch, or as ſo conſidered upon the whole, is plainly repugnant to the very Idea of Will or Choice, and deſtroys it in Conception. We have no other Idea of *Certainty* but the *perceived Neceſſity* of a Thing, and where we have not this Perception, we can know or be certain of nothing. But ſurely no Body can think that God governs the World by *Contingency* or *Chance*, or that this is the true Notion of *Free Agency*, *Will*, and Choice.

Choice. But I hope ſhortly to clear up theſe Matters a little farther in a diſtinct Treatiſe, concerning Providence, Moral Government, and Free Agency. But though this is nothing at all to the Controverſy between you and me, yet I cannot drop it without taking Notice of one Paſſage more of your's, *page* 155, where you ſay, *But if you deny, that ſuch Events as theſe, being purely* contingent *in their* own Nature, *can be certainly foreknown and predicted, it is contrary to plain Fact and Experience, as well as to the general Senſe of Philoſophers.* But if you could clearly prove, *Euſebius*, any Moral Action to be *purely contingent in its own Nature*, I ſhould think you the greateſt Philoſopher that ever appeared. To confound *Free Agency* with *Contingency*, is to put all Creation and Providence upon *Chance*, and leaves you no Principle or Rule of Judgment at all, with Regard to Free Actions. A Thing that is purely contingent in its own Nature, muſt be in its own Nature uncertain, and no Underſtanding can be certain of a Thing that is ſimply and abſolutely in its own Nature uncertain, as having no Cauſe or Reaſon either without or within itſelf, why it ſhould be ſo, rather than otherwiſe. This is the Principle, upon which ſome learned Men have denied the Divine Preſcience, and upon which Suppoſition they can never be confuted. But ſuch Free Agency as this, a Liberty conſiſting in mere Contingency, would not be conſiſtent with Moral Agency, nor with any Wiſdom,

Reaſon,

Reaſon, or Foreſight in the Government of the World.

But you think I might have concluded with *more Reaſon and Propriety, that conſequently the Prophets foretelling ſuch future Events with ſo much Exactneſs and Certainty, were immediately inſpired by God, and from him derived their ſupernatural Foreknowledge.* I am ſure I never denied this, but did, I think, ſuppoſe it, and left you to make the beſt of it. But I cannot ſee, that you make any Uſe at all of it to your own Purpoſe, or againſt me, as to the Proof of any Doctrines. The Prophets might be inſpired or ſupernaturally aſſiſted in the Knowledge of future Events, and yet at the ſame Time might be greatly miſtaken, and very erroneous themſelves, in Doctrinals of great Conſequence. It is very plain, I think, that the Foreknowledge of future Events cannot at all affect or alter the Character of Perſons, or the Nature and Tendency of Doctrines; but are juſt ſuch as they are in themſelves, and ſuch as they would and muſt have been, whether they had been foreſeen and foretold or not. This you ſaw ſo very plainly, that you found it neceſſary to grant it, and bid me welcome to the Conceſſion, *page* 159; and yet you are preſently *quite amazed* that I ſhould apply this to *Mohammed* and the *Pope*, as if there was no Difference in the Characters of *Chriſt* and *Mohammed.* I muſt here profeſs, *Euſebius*, that I am as much *amazed* as you, if the Accompliſhment of Prophecy proves Inſpiration,

ſpiration or immediate Revelation from God, the Prophecies relating to Mohammed and the Pope, ſuppoſing them equally plain and clear, muſt prove that as much as the Prophecies relating to Chriſt himſelf. You urge the Accompliſhment of Prophecy to no other Purpoſe that I can ſee, but to prove Inſpiration or Revelation, and when I had ſuppoſed or granted a Thing that you could make no Uſe of, I can ſee no Occaſion there was for any ſuch *Aſtoniſhment*. But I am glad however, that your Proof from Prophecy, as to what you would really conclude from it, is not at all weakened or invalidated by any Thing I had ſaid. I am therefore content that this Part of the Argument ſhould reſt where it is, upon the Conceſſions on both Sides. But as to the Prophecies relating to the Meſſiah being fulfilled in Chriſt, I think I have ſaid enough to prove the contrary. It is evident beyond all reaſonable Contradiction, that the prophetic Meſſiaſhip was to be a temporal *Jewiſh* Kingdom, and a State of univerſal Peace and Righteouſneſs upon Earth, which is what Chriſt never promiſed or undertook for, nor did he ever give his Diſciples the leaſt Ground or Reaſon to expect it from him, either at that Time or any other. This as I have ſhewn was a national Deluſion which they had been all along under, and I think I have given the true Reaſon and Occaſion of it from their miſtaking the Nature, Extent, and Conditionality of the *Abrahamic* Covenant. But the Prejudice was

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ſo deeply and ſtrongly riveted, that they could never conquer or get rid of it to this Day. And is it not ſurprizing, that theſe very prophetic Writings, that were intended to prepare the Way to Chriſt and his ſpiritual Kingdom, ſhould have always proved the great Obſtacle and Prejudice to the more general Reception and farther Propagation of the Goſpel; and that the People with whom thoſe Oracles of God were entruſted, ſhould have been from that Time to this, the bittereſt Enemies to Chriſtianity? Doubtleſs, *Euſebius*, there muſt be ſome natural Reaſon for this, and the perverſe Interpretation that we have made of their Prophecies, by turning a *temporal* into a *ſpiritual* Kingdom, has been the Ground of it all. But upon this Principle, if you go on with it, you will ſooner loſe your Credit as Chriſtian Divines, than you will ever convince the *Jews* upon *Jewiſh Principles*. You may carry this Point as far as you will or can, but, upon any ſuch Suppoſition, I ſhall always be a Chriſtian againſt a *Jew*, and a *Jew* againſt a Chriſtian, for I know of no ſuch Compoſition, and ſo far as I can ſee, when you have ſaid all you can, you muſt be a *Jew* or a *Chriſtian*. The learned Chriſtian Clergy have long endeavoured to compound this Matter, but with ſuch ill Succeſs, that, after a Trial of 1700 Years under the Light of the Goſpel, they have made almoſt all the thinking Part of the Chriſtian World Deiſts; ſo far as Men have had the Li-

berty of thinking for themſelves, and have not been puniſhed for ſpeaking their Minds.

The *Jewiſh* Scheme of Chriſtianity, *Euſebius*, can never be ſupported but by Perſecution and penal Laws, nor has it ever been otherwiſe ſupported from the Beginning of Chriſtianity to this Day. It is in vain to attempt by Reaſoning, to turn a temporal into a ſpiritual Kingdom; and you muſt give me leave to ſay, that all the learned Chriſtian Divines who have hitherto attempted it, have left Chriſtianity and themſelves too great Loſers by it. You will ſay, perhaps, that theſe are peculiar Notions of my own, and that the moſt learned Divines and deepeſt Philoſophers are againſt me. But this is not the Point in Queſtion. If you have taken up with your Opinions and Principles, implicitly from Philoſophers and Divines, you might have ſaved yourſelf the Trouble of talking with me. I ſhould rather have one good Argument than a hundred thouſand Quotations againſt me, for one might convince me as the other never can. Were you talking with a Catechumen, you might take this Method of Inſtruction, as every one muſt receive the firſt Rudiments of Knowledge upon the Authority of their Teachers; but if you would not conſider me in this Capacity, you ſhould always urge your own Reaſon againſt me, and depend on no Authority at all. You know very well, *Euſebius*, that I do not believe the Infallibility of the Biblical Hiſtorians, and therefore you ought never to talk with me upon

on any ſuch Suppoſition till you can prove it. And when this has been rejected, I wonder you ſhould urge more modern and diſputable Authorities, as if we muſt be determined by them. I am very ſure, *Euſebius*, that I never ſtudied any Art, Science, or Faculty, upon this Foot of *bare Authority*; nor do I think that this can deſerve the Name of *Knowledge*, or make any Man ever the wiſer. I might ſhew my Reading in this Way, but not my Judgment or Underſtanding.

But, *page.* 185, and forwards, you come to a Point upon which, in Reality, the whole Controverſy muſt depend; and therefore the intelligent Reader, I am ſure, will forgive me, if I ſhould here be a little the more particular. I had urged that *human Faith* could not be *divine Faith*, or that believing a Thing upon *human Authority*, could not be the ſame Thing as believing it upon *divine Authority*. Now the Sum of your Argument here is, that what you believe as a Matter of divine Faith, or upon divine Authority, is ſuppoſed to have come at firſt immediately from God by Inſpiration; though you own at the ſame Time, that you have nothing but human, fallible Teſtimony for this, and as to any rational Evidence, independent of Authority, you do not pretend to: But to call a human, fallible, uncertain, and precarious Faith, *divine Faith*; and to pretend it to be founded on divine Authority, Inſpiration, or immediate Revelation from God, I thought a very great Abſurdity. For

at this Rate, all the Errors and Contradictions in the World may be *divine*, there is no Difference between *divine* and *human*, and we may be as well *divinely* as *humanly* miſtaken. But you here take ſome Pains, *Euſebius*, to correct my miſunderſtanding, and to let me know by ſeveral Quotations, which I did not want, that our Proteſtant Divines never claimed an *infallible Faith*, as the Papiſts do. But, with Submiſſion, I had never charged the Proteſtant Divines with claiming an *infallible Faith*, but with the Abſurdity and Inconſiſtency of pretending to an abſolutely certain and infallible *Rule*, for a moſt uncertain fallible *Faith*. If the Papiſts have an infallible *Judge*, and the Proteſtants an infallible *Rule*, their *Faith* muſt be equally infallible, ſo far as determined by the infallible Judge, or directed by the infallible Rule. But if they cannot perceive or determine the Senſe of the infallible *Judge*, nor you of the infallible *Rule*, I beſeech you, are you not both equally in the dark, and might you not as well own the Judge, Rule, and Faith, to be all equally human, and fallible? I wiſh, *Euſebius*, you could tell me what an infallible Rule is, which no Body knows the length of, ſo as to come to any Agreement about it, but what one ſhall make an Inch, the other ſhall make a Mile, both meaſuring at the ſame Time by the ſame Rule. Whatever you may think, I take this to be a very puzzling Point in *School-Divinity*, and the Hinge of the Controverſy between the two moſt oppoſite

Parties that are both equally for *Revelation above Reaſon.* Had I here a mind to digreſs ſo far, I could eaſily ſhew, that all the oppoſite, irreconcilable Factions in Religion, on both Sides, have granted and agreed in ſome falſe Principle or other; by which Means both Sides have fairly confuted each other, without being able to defend themſelves. This I take to be the Caſe in the Controverſy between the Papiſts and Proteſtants, for ſo far as I underſtand it, the Diſpute has never been about Infallibility itſelf, but the Subject of it. The Proteſtants have always claimed Infallibility in *Rule*, as much as the Papiſts in *Judgment*, and have been both equally divided among themſelves. I mention this only as the Hinge and turning Point between them, but as to particular Doctrines, I know not which of them have been moſt abſurd and inconſiſtent. But I here only refer, *Euſebius*, to the Doctrines of our firſt Reformers, and not to the preſent State of Religion, as it now ſtands among our Prelatical and Preſbyterian Divines. I think we are widely departed from the Doctrines of our Reformation, and, if I miſtake not, from the Doctrines of the XXXIX Articles of the Church of *England.*

But I would not draw you off from the main Point. Beſides what I have offered already, I muſt take ſome Notice of ſeveral Things which you have incidentally dropt up and down in Oppoſition to me, with Regard to the Evidence of Miracles, as a Proof of Re-

velation above Reaſon, or of *Revealed*, as diſtinct from *Natural* Religion. I need not here repeat to you again, that by Revelation I mean the Religion of Nature revived, or the true Principles of Reaſon reſtored in Matters of Religion and Moral Rectitude; but ſhall take it for granted, that we are agreed as to the Point in Debate, ſo far as not to miſtake the Queſtion itſelf. Nothing, I think, can be more abſurd, than to ground a fallible human Faith upon an infallible divine Teſtimony, ſince it is connecting together two Things that are abſolutely inconſiſtent and incompatible. If the Rule be infallible, the Faith or Judgment built upon it, muſt certainly be infallible too, ſo far as it is conformable to the Rule, and where it has not this Agreement and Conformity, it muſt be a mere human fallible Faith, and cannot, with any Senſe or Conſiſtency, be reſolved into a divine infallible Teſtimony. You have here a divine infallible Foundation, for a human fallible Faith, and to what Purpoſe then is ſuch a Foundation laid, when no Body knows how to build upon it, or whether the Building reſts upon that Foundation or any other? You have here a Rule which is abſolutely divine and infallible in *itſelf*, but in all Reſpects human and fallible to *you*, as to any Judgment you can make of it. But to pretend to walk by an infallible Rule, without being infallibly guided and directed, is plainly inconſiſtent and contradictory. You ſecure to yourſelf an Infallibility, or Sub-

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ject of Infallibility, different from the Papists only in Name, Pretence, and Appearance; while the endless Contentions and Disputes on both Sides, one against the other, and among themselves, make it evident, that there is no infallible Guide, Rule, or Measure of Judgment at all, either on one Side or the other. But such Darkness and Confusion must always be the Consequence, when Men will resolve Religion ultimately into any mere positive Authority, prior to, and independent of, the rational Evidence and Moral Fitness of the Things themselves. And you have here, *Eusebius*, brought yourself into a Wood, out of which, I believe, you will hardly find your Way. *Theophanes* saw very well the Force of this Argument, and how it must come upon him, and therefore would not venture to make himself accountable for the Infallibility of the Biblical Historians, or for the infallible Evidence of Miracles for the Truth of Doctrines, supposing even the infallible Certainty of the Facts, which yet can never be proved, as depending on bare human Testimony.

But if those original Historians must be infallible, so far as you think fit to make them so, it would be proper to settle the Bounds of this Infallibility, or how far it extended. Were they infallible as *Historians*, or were their *Senses* infallible, and not liable to Deception like other Mens, or were they infallible Judges of Facts, as owing to a *natural* or *supernatural* Cause? Were they infallible in

their Judgment concerning the temporal Prophetic Kingdom, or national Reſtoration, which they were ſo ſtrongly perſuaded of, and ſo earneſtly expected at that Time, or infallible afterwards againſt St *Paul* with Regard to the Terms of Communion between the *Jews* and *Gentiles*? Theſe are Matters of great Importance to be ſettled; but to harangue in general upon Infallibility without fixing it, is ſaying nothing.

Either the Miracles wrought by the Apoſtles and Diſciples of the Circumciſion, proved the infallible Truth and Certainty of all the Doctrines they taught, and Opinions which they held, concerning Chriſt and his Kingdom, or they did not. If they did, they muſt prove all the ſtrong Prejudices they were under, concerning the temporal Kingdom and national Reſtoration; and of which vulgar Errors no Miracles or Inſpiration ever cured them; they ſtill continued their Obedience to the whole Law, as a Matter of Religion and Conſcience to them, and they ſtruggled hard in their Council to impoſe it on the *Gentiles*; and this was about 20 Years after the Reſurrection of Chriſt, and their receiving the Holy Ghoſt, and they firmly expected the coming of Chriſt to his temporal Kingdom, in that very Age and Generation. Now ſurely they could have no ſpecial Inſpiration or Revelation from God in all this, while they were under ſuch groſs Errors concerning the Nature and Extent of Chriſt's Kingdom, and the Laws by which it was to be governed. And if they were not infallible in every Thing concerning

cerning Chriſt and his Kingdom, I believe you would not undertake, *Euſebius*, to ſettle the Boundaries, or to ſhew wherein they were or were not infallible. If theſe *Nazerene Jews*, who were the firſt Preachers of Chriſt, were inſpired, and infallible in all that they taught, there could be no other poſſible Way of Salvation, but by an actual Faith in Jeſus, as the Prophetic Meſſiah, and being baptized in his Name; and all Men who had not this Faith and Baptiſm, were to be damned. But I think I have ſaid enough already to prove, that there can be no Connexion between the Power of working Miracles, and the Truth of Doctrines, or the Righteouſneſs of Perſons: And the Pretence, that God cannot, in his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, ſuffer Men to be impoſed on by ſuch Evidence, without controuling it by a ſuperior Power of the ſame Kind, is an Impeachment of Providence, and a Contradiction to the Experience of the whole World. But the Truth is, that God never propoſed Miracles, or a ſupernatural Exertion of Power, as the proper Evidence and Proof of Doctrines; and therefore, they who will be thus impoſed on, or impoſe on themſelves, ought not to blame God and Providence for it. Almoſt the whole World had been deluded and led away by the Pretenſions to Prophecy, Revelation, and Miracles, while no ſuperior Miracles had been wrought againſt them; and this is the Caſe of a great Part of the World now, where our Goſpel never came. And all this has been occaſioned by

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Mens giving up their Reaſon, and ſeeking for ſupernatural Proofs of Things above Reaſon; and the more Men quit their Reaſon, and the moral Fitneſs of Things in Matters of Religion, and give themſelves up to ſupernatural Proofs of Things above Reaſon, the more Impoſture, Superſtition, and falſe Religion muſt grow, and prevail, as we ſee now in all the Popiſh Countries, and among the *Greek* Churches. That the Doctrines of Chriſt are true and divine, as they enlighten the Underſtanding, and purify the Affections, I believe as much as you, and, I think, upon much more certain and ſolid Grounds, if you build your Faith upon Miracles.

I had put the Caſe of a Father, Maſter, or any Superior, ſending Orders in a round-about doubtful Way to the Perſons under his Care and Authority, without his own Hand or Seal, or any certain Mark or Criterion, internal or external, that it came from him. And from hence I concluded, that the Family, or governed Society, would do well to ſuſpend their Judgment and acting upon it, till they could receive ſome more certain authentic Account from their Superior. And thus far you agree with me, that ſuch Conduct of theirs would be perfectly right upon the Suppoſitions here put; but you cannot allow that this Caſe has any Reſemblance to the Caſe of Traditional Revelation, in which we are to receive Things as from God, without any Stamp or Signature of the moral Character, by any rational Evidence to our Underſtandings, prior to that abſolute Au-

thority which is ſuppoſed to require it. You are very long, and laboured upon this Caſe for 30 Pages together, *pag.* 206—236; and it affords you great Matter of Triumph, and yet, for ought I can ſee, the Compariſon and Parallel muſt hold good after all. You take it for granted all along, that the Miracles were wrought, to prove certain Doctrines and Obligations of Poſitive Religion, which had otherwiſe no Ground or Reaſon either for their Truth or Uſefulneſs. This is what you ſtill ſuppoſe and argue upon, and yet you have not ſaid one Word, and I am fully perſuaded, that you cannot ſay any thing, for the Proof of it: You cannot tell us what thoſe Doctrines and Duties of Poſitive Religion are, to which he has ſet the Seal of his Authority by Miracles, and made of ſtanding perpetual Obligation to Chriſtians; you can produce no ſuch Matters, either of Faith or Practice. As to the Points you mention, as peculiar and fundamental to Chriſtianity, I have conſidered them already, and proved that either they are not peculiar to Chriſtianity, or elſe that they cannot be fundamental, as being Matters concerning which Chriſtians themſelves are vaſtly divided, and about which they are never like to come to any Agreement. If the perpetual Obligation of Poſitives, and the Practice of Chriſt and the Apoſtles, as to what they complied with themſelves, and required in others, could be confirmed by Miracles, this muſt prove the ſtanding Obligation of the whole Law, even after the Death of Chriſt; and in the

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ſame Way, all the *Jewiſh* Rites, Cuſtoms, and peculiar Notions, might be introduced into Chriſtianity, and confirmed by the Miracles, Practice, and Command of Chriſt and the Apoſtles; and in the ſame Way the Papiſts would prove all their ſeven Sacraments by Miracles, as well as you can the two which you have retained. Now if Miracles cannot, and were never intended to prove the divine Authority and perpetual Obligation of any mere Poſitives in Religion, my Compariſon and Parallel, as above, notwithſtanding the Pains you have taken to ſet it aſide, muſt ſtill hold good in every Part of it; and that it does ſo, I muſt conclude, till you have farther cleared up the Matter, and ſhewn us what *Jewiſh* Poſitives are, and what are not, proved by Miracles: and till you have done this, *Euſebius*, you will in vain talk in ſuch a general Way of the Evidence and Proof of Miracles, abſtracted from all prior rational Evidence, or moral Fitneſs.

You ſpend a great Part of your 4th Chapter againſt Mr *Chandler*, who had maintained, that Miracles alone could not prove the Truth, Certainty, and divine Authority of Doctrines, without taking into the Account, the Nature and Tendency of the Doctrines themſelves.

I am ſorry, *Euſebius*, to find that you are of a different Opinion, while you have ſo little to ſay for it. I doubt not but Mr *Chandler* will be able to defend himſelf; but without entring into your particular Debate with him, I think I have

I have defended his Notion already againſt any Thing that you have offered to the contrary: And when you have quitted the Evidence of Reaſon as prior to Authority, I cannot ſee what Guard you can have againſt any Impoſture, Superſtition, or falſe Religion in the World: I cannot perceive, upon this Foot, how you could convict any Impoſtor, but by denying the Facts, as he would doubtleſs as readily deny your's; and, perhaps, a third Perſon might deny both, and put you to clear up the *Truth* by *Faith*, and *Senſe* too, above *Reaſon*; and then, *Euſebius*, you might very well paſs for an extraordinary Reaſoner. It is true, that Chriſt and the Apoſtles of the Circumciſion taught the *Jews* very much in the authoritative Way, as they had been always trained up in that pupil-pedagogue Way, as I have largely proved. But St *Paul* did not thus preach the Goſpel among the *Gentiles*, as all the Epiſtles and genuine Writings of that Apoſtle moſt evidently prove; but you ſeem, *Euſebius*, to be entirely for the *authoritative*, and againſt the rational Way of teaching.

Poſitive Religion, whether placed in ſpeculative doubtful Opinions, or in external Modes, Rites, and Forms of Worſhip, which are indifferent in themſelves, and have no Connexion with moral Rectitude, or particular Tendency to ſtrengthen and promote the inward, ſpiritual and divine Temper, is the very Nature, Eſſence, and proper Notion of *Superſtition*. And herein have terminated all the Diſputes, Contentions, Wars, and Bloodſhed of the Chriſtian

ſtian World, while Religion itſelf has been quite excluded, and left out of the Queſtion. A Man's ſpeculative Opinions, which have no Connexion with moral Conduct, or his external Modes or Forms of Worſhip, in expreſſing his Senſe and Acknowledgment of the ſupreme Being, is no more a Part of the Religion of the Action, than the Dreſs, Poſture, or Tone of the Voice is a Part of the Man. Theſe Things are variable at different Times, and in different Countries, as much as Dreſs, Language, Cuſtoms, Manners, and the like, which common Conſent or Authority have ſettled, and may be altered or varied under different Circumſtances, as all other Things of an indifferent and mutable Nature: But Religion, or the inward ſpiritual and divine Spirit and Temper, is ſtill the ſame, and does not change with the Climate, Cuſtom, or Language. Religion is a Thing, that can neither be produced nor deſtroyed by all the Methods of human Policy; no Smiles of Fortune, or Favour of Princes and Patrons, can ever bring a Man to love God ſupremely, and his Neighbour as himſelf, but would be much more likely to have a quite contrary Effect; nor can all the Frowns and Rage of Tyrants, or Terrors of this World, prevent or reſtrain this divine Spirit and Temper; and placing *Religion* in any Thing elſe, is, as I have ſaid, the very Eſſence of *Superſtition*. Speculative Opinions and external indifferent Modes and Forms of Worſhip can have no Relation to *Religion*; though all Religion muſt be clothed

and

and circumſtantiated with ſome ſuch Modes and external Forms or other. To refuſe Compliance with any ſuch indifferent Rites and Forms, and to ſuffer for it, under the Notion of Religion and Conſcience, is the Weakneſs of *Superſtition*; and to force and compel any ſuch Things againſt Conſcience and inward Judgment, is the Wickedneſs and Outrage of it, rejecting ſuch Things as Matters of Religion and Conſcience, and ſuffering for Non-Compliance on the one hand, or penally impoſing them on the other, are both equally founded in Superſtition; but the one is ſimple Superſtition, and the other Superſtition complicated with Inhumanity and Injuſtice; one is the Weakneſs, and the other the Wickedneſs and Outrage of it. Common Humanity would incline us to be very tender of Conſcience, and ſuffer Men to worſhip God in their own Way, while it is innocent and inoffenſive to the Society; and human Prudence would diſpoſe a Man to Compliance, in ſuch Caſes, without Force and Compulſion, rather than be any great Sufferer by it. The different Rituals and external Forms and Modes of Worſhip in different Countries and Church-Conſtitutions, provided there is nothing indecent or immoral in them, may be as well complied with as their different Cuſtoms, Dreſs, or Language. But ſuch Compliance ought to be free and voluntary, and not forced or compelled. It is impoſſible, in the Nature of the Thing, to force *Religion* itſelf. Nothing under that *Name* can be guarded and promoted

promoted by Force and Compulſion but *Superſtition.*

You may think, perhaps, that I am here running off from the Queſtion, and talking beſide the Purpoſe; but I ſhall never think ſo while I am ſupporting the true and only Diſtinction between *Religion* and *Superſtition.* And as the Chriſtian Religion is the beſt Thing in the World, I am ſure Chriſtian Superſtition is the worſt. And as long as you place Religion either in doubtful ſpeculative Opinions, or external indifferent Rites, Ceremonies, and Modes of Worſhip, under a Pretence of divine Authority, I am ſure, it muſt be in your Power, while the Laity are ignorant enough; to make your *own Intereſt Religion,* and to plague and puniſh every Body that will not, or cannot, come into your Scheme of *human Policy,* or *poſitive Religion.*

You muſt know very well, that all the Diſputes, Contentions, Wars, and Bloodſhed, of the Chriſtian World, have been owing to the Eccleſiaſtical Pretence of *poſitive Religion,* or *Revelation* above *Reaſon.* And I wiſh the Patrons of this Scheme in Chriſtendom had been as innocent and inoffenſive to States and Kingdoms, as the Patrons and Prieſts of the old Heathen Superſtition. But the contrary is too flagrant, and too ſenſibly felt in this unhappy Nation, where the Diſtinctions between Whig and Tory, High-Church and Low, Prelatiſts and Preſbyterians, all grounded upon *Revelation* above *Reaſon,* have almoſt put us out of a

Capacity

Capacity of uniting in any common Intereſt, or National Self-Defence. And while this Humour prevails among us, of keeping up old Grudges, and Party-Diſtinction, at firſt founded in *Superſtition*, and now continued and fomented by *State-Policy*, it is not likely that we ſhould preſerve our civil and religious Liberties, Peace and Happineſs long. The divine Right of Epiſcopacy, or Preſbytery; the Reaſonableneſs of Toleration, and Liberty of Conſcience; or the Neceſſity of rooting out Error and falſe Religion by Force; the revealed Obligation of abſolute Non-Reſiſtance and Paſſive Obedience; or the natural Right of Reſiſtance and Self-Defence, in Caſe of Neceſſity; theſe are the hopeful Topicks upon which we have divided, and the Diſputes and Contentions which we have had about *Revelation* above *Reaſon*. I wiſh there could be any Remedy for this; but I doubt the prevailing Party among us will always have Revelation on their Side, and mind *Religion* more than *State-Intereſt*, or national Happineſs. But this muſt be always a Religion and Revelation above Reaſon.

I have ſaid thus much, *Euſebius*, not to draw you off from the main Point; theſe are ſome of the peculiar Advantages of *Unrevealed Religion*, or *Revelation* above *Reaſon*; and how happy has it been for us, and is likely to be, that we have been, and continue to be, thus divided. But of all the Diſtinctions, either in *Religion* or *Policy*, that ever I have met with, I know no other but between a wiſe Man and

a Fool, or an honeſt Man and a Knave. If we could but keep to this Diſtinction, we might drop all others, and at the ſame Time maintain *true Religion* and *Civil Liberty*; and to avoid, as much as poſſible, all former Diſputes about Religion, I would only put this Queſtion to you, Whether good Senſe and Honeſty, abſtracted from School-Divinity, is not the beſt Teſt of Religion and Patriotiſm? And I am very ſure, Sir, that natural good Senſe, and natural Honour, may be better underſtood and defined than Revelation above Reaſon.

It could not be expected, that in this ſhort Letter to you, I ſhould enter particularly and minutely into the Argument of your whole Book, and much leſs into what is yet to come, for I pretend to no prophetic Spirit; but this I may aſſure you of, that when we ſee your whole Work, I ſhall give it all the Attention and Regard that can be due to a Gentleman of great Learning, good Senſe, free Inquiry, and a Friend to Mankind, ſuch as I take you to be: And upon this Suppoſition, which I am ſure is not merely preſumptive, I ſhall here ſubſcribe myſelf,

SIR,

Your real Friend

and humble Servant,

PHILALETHES.

DATE DUE

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